

THE
H O U S E
OF
M A R L E Y.

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A N O V E L.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

Fortune, made up of toys and impudence,
Thou common jade, that hast not common sense!
But, fond of bus'ness, insolently dares,
Pretend to rule, and spoil the world's affairs.

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THE
HOUSE OF MARLEY.

CHAP. I.

THE departure of Lucy and Alicia from Marley Hall, cast a gloom over the spirits of Sir Augustus: he had become strongly attached to them from two causes, one, their great resemblance to his much loved wife, the other, that innate dignity of manner, which so strikingly characterized all their actions;

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that when the old gentleman saw them contrasted with his other more fashionable granddaughters, his heart acknowledged their superiority, and he fondly contemplated in them, that elevation of sentiment which he had ever annexed to their name, and believed to be a peculiar attribute of his family. He wished to have detained them, to erase with his own hand any impression of meanness, if such should ever appear to have been made, by their connexion with the Hoptons; but he had observed the discontent of his daughter, and the envy of her children; he believed a separation necessary to the peace of his family, and considering Mrs. Whitmore's natural claims on him as the strongest, he determined to pursue his first intention, of committing the fair sisters to the care of his ancient relation; but when they were gone, and reflection pointed out the probability, that he should see them no more, his spirits sunk; he accused himself of weakness, in yielding up his own satisfaction, to indulge the unreasonable wishes of another; he

he should have been more master of his house, as well as his actions, to have retained in it whom he pleased. His grand-children were all equally allied to him, and should, if any disturbance had arisen, been equally obedient to his authority. Too long had this young branch of the House of Marley been alienated from the parent stock; and now that it was but just restored, and planted in its native soil, it was rudely torn away again.

These reflections, however, came too late; the innocent daughters of his once loved Henry were banished from the mansion of their ancestors; while others, far less amiable, and less in need of its protecting shelter, fully enjoyed it. The idea was painful in the extreme; he felt himself guilty of injustice, and nothing but the fear of appearing fickle in his resolutions, prevented him from recalling them, after the first day's journey. Gloomy and sorrowful, he joined the family at breakfast; and when it was over, con-

trary to custom, retired, and shut himself up alone till dinner. The young ladies strove in vain to amuse him ; even music lost its power ; and though he received their attentions thankfully, and wished to appear pleased, he could not ; his heart was heavy, and his looks dejected.

Mrs. Witmore was not more at ease than her father on this occasion ; she was conscious that his melancholy arose from the absence of her nieces ; it was an unequivocal proof of his regard for them ; and though she was gratified by their removal, yet the envy she experienced at this confirmation of all her fears, destroyed the satisfaction she had promised herself from the event. With bitterness of heart she complained to her husband. " They have bewitched him," she cried ; " they have engrossed all his affections to themselves ; he grieves for them, and he regards us with indifference, if not with dislike." " No matter, my dear," replied Mr. Whitmore, " they are gone, and

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we are present with him ; absence has shaken more firm attachments than this ; they were dangerous rivals, it must be owned, but our girls must exert themselves, and I make no doubt but they will succeed in recovering their former place in his esteem." " Never," said she, " while this insinuating Augustus remains with him ; don't you observe, that whatever notice he bestows on any person, is on him ?" " Well, well," said Mr. Whitmore, " don't be uneasy ; you know that the young gentleman will soon leave us in order to compleat his studies."

The society at the hall was enlivened the second day by the arrival of Lord and Lady Stanmore. Sir Augustus was greatly affected at the interview, which was the only one that had ever taken place between him and her ladyship since he parted with her at her father's, to go in pursuit of his refractory son. That circumstance came fresh into his mind, and another still more painful ; the melancholy fate of that unfortunate son, in

the act of quitting his country, to seek for bread. Sir Augustus could not speak ; he grasped the hand of Lady Stanmore, who, unable to restrain her feelings, burst into tears ; while her ladyship and the old gentleman continued in this speechless agitation, Augustus entered the room ; she needed not to be informed who he was ; the moment she cast her eyes on him, she exclaimed, “ Ah my poor Henry !” The youth, strongly attracted, advanced towards her, and she threw her arms round his neck. “ My dear boy,” said she, “ will you look on me as your mother ; I was the dearest friend of her who gave you birth, and often fondled you in these arms, when we strove which should nurse you most ; will you, then, my Augustus, let me supply her place ? shall I be your mother ?” “ Oh, yes !” cried he, too full to utter more, and pressed her hand to his lips. “ Behold your brother, then,” said she, and presented him to Lord Stanmore. “ Edward,” she added, “ you must love Augustus Marley, and you, Augustus,

Augustus, must love my Edward ; you are worthy of each other." The young men embraced, and a glance of intelligence passed between them, which spoke more than words could convey, and proved them to be of kindred souls.

The Miss Whitmores now made their appearance, and a scene of complimentary form ensued, in which no heart was interested save that of Miss Whitmore, who endeavoured, by an affected embarrassment, to attract the attention of Lord Stanmore, and impress him with an idea of her extreme delicacy, in revealing the tender sentiments she had entertained for him, only by her efforts to conceal them. His lordship, who admired her as a very fine girl, and immediately on his arrival from India, had been greatly struck with the brilliancy of her complexion ; paid her such attentions as admitted of the construction both her mother and herself chose to put on them ; and his imaginary addresses received the greatest encouragement,

ment, while he, unconscious of the error his conduct had given rise to, thought no more of Miss Whitmore from the moment she quitted London; and mixing more with society than his health at first permitted, soon became familiarized to beautiful faces, and by the time he got to Marley Hall, could gaze on the fair dames of Britain with as little emotion as he was wont to do on the olive beauties of Asia; he, therefore, was no longer particular in his address to Miss Whitmore, and paid her mother and sisters the same polite attentions which he offered her, and every other lady with whom he conversed; for he admired all the sex; he esteemed some, but to love he was yet a stranger; for though his heart was fraught with sensibility, it could not be captivated by exterior graces, however exquisite; it was a mind he sought for, of which his imagination had formed a sort of model; and he had hitherto looked for it in vain, even amongst the most accomplished. This difficulty to be pleased, in Lord Stanmore, was a source
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of great uneasiness to his mother, to whom his most secret thoughts were freely confided ; for she feared that he either would never meet with the perfection he looked for, or find it under such circumstances as would render it unattainable to him ; and in either case she trembled for his happiness. " Expect not to find perfection," she would say, " and you will not be disappointed ; but should you ever be so unfortunate as to imagine you have made the inestimable discovery, and under that impression marry, you must of course be wretched ; for the deception will soon appear, and she whom your vivid fancy has pictured as an angel, though she should prove to be the most amiable of women, will at best become an object of indifference to you ; the consequence of which is but too plain." " Fear not, my dearest mother," was ever his reply ; " believe me I cannot be deceived ; nor do I seek the perfection of an angel, which I know is not to be found on earth ; but I seek a heart glowing with tenderness ; and

if it is to be found within a female breast, as I firmly believe it can, one glance of an eye will discover it to me, and that instant decides my fate." "And should that glance proceed from the eye of a married woman," replies the anxious mother. "Oh my Edward! for heaven's love, correct in time this too romantic fancy."

The difference in Lord Stanmore's behaviour to Miss Whitmore, was not at first perceived even by herself; but when numberless opportunities were given him, and he availed himself of none, to avow his passion, the disappointment of the young lady, and surprise of her mother, were indelible, and it was not without great address that they concealed their chagrin, and endeavoured to conjecture the cause of this mighty change. "He has seen some one who has pleased him better," cried the mother; "and if that's the case, I shall be able to discover it by questioning Lady Stanmore." "Oh, no!" replied Miss Whitmore, "say nothing

nothing to her ; she is very shrewd, and may suspect the truth ; and I hate her so, for her great partiality to this Mr. Marley, that I would not for the world she should discover my foolish attachment to her son, which I am resolved, cost me what it may, to conquer. Should he afterwards think proper to be more explicit, why, I shall have no objection to share his title."

This prudent resolution was strictly characteristic of Miss Whitmore, whose heart had never admitted one tender sensation, and who only fancied herself in love, because she really had a strong desire to possess rank and fortune, and chose that to which an elegant young man was annexed, rather than a disagreeable or an old one. Yet had a ducal coronet offered, though incumbered with age and infirmity, the sentimental Edward would have been discarded without scruple.

Lady Stanmore, though very desirous of visiting the estate of her late father, which

she had not seen for many years, was yet prevailed on to lengthen her visit at Marley Hall to nearly a fortnight ; which she the more readily consented to, as she beheld with satisfaction a strong friendship cementing between her son and the young Augustus, for whom she entertained an affection truly maternal ; and hoped that the too elevated ideas of Lord Stanmore would be corrected by the more calm imagination of his friend, in whom was united with the ardour natural to youth, a judgment and discrimination not to be met with in those of maturer years. They were continually together, to the total discontent of Miss Whitmore, who now began to blame Augustus for the apparent coolness of her supposed lover, and to attribute, however absurdly, to his machinations, the loss of those affections which she never was possessed of ; for looking on the Marley's as her natural enemies, she expected at their hands the same malicious treatment which she, if in her power, would have bestowed on them ; and under this impression, thought it

very natural for Augustus to use his influence over the young nobleman, for the purpose of alienating his heart from her. She communicated this suspicion to her mother, who readily coincided in her opinion; and the unconscious youth, from being an object of dislike, became one of the most virulent hatred to both ladies, who now avoided speaking to him as much as possible, and if he chanced to address them, scarcely deigned him a reply.

The time fixed on for Lord and Lady Stanmore's departure, arrived, without regret on any side, save that of Sir Augustus and the young men; the former from his increasing age and infirmities, felt every separation from friends the more acute, from the apprehension that he should meet with them no more; and the young gentlemen had discovered so many amiable qualities in each other, as excited in them a strong and reciprocal friendship, which the prospect of a long absence deeply wounded; they promised
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however, that time should not disunite their hearts, whatever space might separate their persons ; that they would write to each other, and meet again with increased regard, from the free communication of sentiment which should be interchanged by letters. With this agreement, ratified by mutual vows, they parted ; and Lord and Lady Stanmore pursued their journey, leaving the inhabitants of Marley Hall variously affected by their departure. Sir Augustus truly regretted it, as did his grandson ; Mrs. Whitmore rejoiced at it, as it relieved her from an embarrassment which she laboured under, in endeavouring to restrain her indignation, at the ill treatment which she imagined his lordship had given her daughter, while she was forced to acknowledge that he had not been sufficiently explicit to admit of a complaint ; neither was it for the honour of the young lady to appear disappointed, however deeply her feelings might be wounded, which happily was not the case ; and the only regret she felt was at being deprived

prived of opportunities of manifesting her indifference, and wounding him in turn, by assailing his pride, which however she hoped to do more amply, when she should meet him in town the following winter, where she doubted not of finding a more steady lover. The rest of the ladies only grieved that their circle was diminished, and instead of the company of two handsome young men, to escort them in their walks, they were now left with one only, and that one far from being a general favourite.

Heavy and cheerless, the time dragged on at Marley Hall, each individual of the family appearing as if they struggled with some secret disquiet, Mr. Whitmore excepted, who strove to enliven, and communicate to others a portion of his own good spirits, especially Sir Augustus, to whom his chief attention was directed, and not entirely without effect, but what revived the old gentleman more than all the kind efforts of his son-in-law, was a letter from Sir John Stanley,

Stanley, containing an account of the health and safety of his fair charge. Mr. Whitmore's satisfaction, on the receipt of the letter was very great, for two reasons he said; first, the great esteem he entertained for the amiable Miss Marleys, whose welfare he would ever rejoice in; and secondly, the pleasure it gave his good father, whom he congratulated on the occasion, and who seemed much pleased at the lively regard manifested by his son Whitmore, for those absent favourites.

Augustus at length received a reluctant command, to prepare for his return to college, which he set about immediately, and was ready to depart much sooner than his grandfather expected or desired. Joseph was appointed to attend him, and after paying a farewell visit to Mr. Elwood, and taking rather a melancholy leave of Sir Augustus, he departed, accompanied, to his no small surprise, by the friendly Mr. Whitmore,

more, who desired permission to attend him to the first stage.

After they had parted, and Joseph took the place beside his master, which had been occupied by Mr. Whitmore, in the post-chaise, Augustus fell into a deep reverie, which lasted a considerable time, when his servant, whose thoughts were employed on the same subject, interrupted him, by abruptly exclaiming, as if to himself, "I cannot for the life of me hit it off."—"What?" cried Augustus. "The reason of Mr. Whitmore's conducting us on the first stage of our journey," replied Joseph; "for I am very certain that it was not out of friendship he did it." "And what other motive could he possibly have?" said Augustus, smiling. "That's the thing I am puzzled at," replied Joseph; "for that he had some design in it, I am as convinced as that I am alive, and I would rather than the best coat I ever possessed, that I was at the Hall for one half hour after he arrives;
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it would go hard but I'd find something out that has honest Walter at the bottom of it." " Joseph," cried Augustus, in a solemn tone of voice, " I am really at a loss how to construe the conduct you assume towards me, respecting the gentleman of whom you speak so freely, and have often been on the point of requiring such an explanation from you, as should set aside all doubts ; tell me, therefore, at once, has Mr. Whitmore ever so far injured you, or any friend of your's, as to excite your hatred ? or from what cause is it, that you would insinuate his most trivial actions were guided by some evil design, either against me or my sisters ? answer me, candidly, for upon my honour our continuance together depends on it." Joseph seemed much disconcerted at this serious address, but being again desired to explain his conduct, he said, " I must own, Sir, that Mr. Whitmore has never done me an injury, thank God ! it was not in his power ; but I have good reason to know that he hates you and your sisters, and will do
you

you all the mischief in his power, and that is the cause of my dislike to him." "How came you by this knowledge?" asked Augustus, "and why does it give you so much concern? I have never done any thing to engage your friendship, which indeed seems to have existed before you ever saw me, for we no sooner met than you declared your apprehensions of a design being formed against me by Mr. Whitmore." "Strange as it may appear to you, Sir," replied Joseph, "my regard for you actually did exist before I saw you; for it was instilled in me, almost from childhood, both by my father and grandfather" "You surprise me more and more," cried Augustus; "how could your father and grandfather know me? who are they? do they live on the estate of Mr. Hopton?" "Alas! no, Sir," answered Joseph, "they are both dead; old Joseph Seymour, my grandfather, was near thirty years porter at Marley Hall, and my father, who was called Thomas, was servant to your father, and
would

would have perished with him in the sea, only that he had been seized with the small-pox, and was in the height of the distemper, when his master sailed for the Indies; nothing could equal his grief, Sir, at the misfortune which happened; and though he had me and another child at the time, he used to lament bitterly, that he had been prevented from going to share the fate of one who was dearer to him than all the world beside." A deep sigh from Augustus interrupted the affectionate domestic, who, however, after a short pause, resumed his subject thus: "My father, Sir, never ceased grieving for the few years he lived after his master; and every one said that it was affliction shortened his days; for he wasted away and died in the prime of life."—"Good God! Joseph," cried Augustus, greatly affected, "how closely have our misfortunes been interwoven together; I have wronged you, my poor fellow, but will endeavour to atone for it; proceed, I beseech you, for I am deeply interested in
your

your little tale." " Well, Sir," continued Joseph, " my mother, who was a hearty young woman, married again, and my grandfather was so incensed against her for it, that he took me and my little sister from her, and was endeavouring, by the help of old Margery, his sister, who lives at the Hall, to bring us up; but my mother, on going to another part of the country, to live with her new husband, stole her daughter away; and Sir Augustus then gave Margery leave to bring me to the house; for he was very fond of her, because she was a great favorite of Lady Marley's; so, Sir, I was reared at Marley Hall. Master Augustus Whitmore, who is a very good young gentleman, was very fond of me, and often said, as we grew up together, that I should be his servant; but some how or other, old Joseph could never abide him, and when I mentioned this, answered very crossly, that I should never serve a Whitmore; no, no, said he, Mr. Henry's son shall be your master, as soon as you are fit to wait on him. From
this

this time out, Sir, he was constantly telling me about you; he said that he saw you once, and that you were the image of your father; and though you were not let inside the gate then, that the time would come, when it would fly open for you. He went on in this manner till he thought I had sense enough to be confided in; and then he told me, that Mr. Whitmore was the cause of all your father's misfortunes; for that he turned the heart of Sir Augustus against him; that he knew very well he would do every thing in his power to keep you off; but that you were heir to the Marley estate in spite of him. He charged me then, as I was in the house, to have an eye about, and to keep in my memory every transaction that I thought could affect your interest, and above all things, never to quit the Hall till I should see you master of it. The last words he spoke were to enjoin me to be faithful to my absent master; and, God knows! Sir, I have done my best to obey him." Joseph ceased, and his master looking affectionately on

on him, said, " Indeed, my good fellow, I know not how I shall be able to make atonement for the injury I have done you."

" Done me, Sir," cried Joseph ; " yes, indeed," replied Augustus, " I have wronged you in the tenderest point ; I suspected your honesty ; for the suddenness of your attachment to me appeared so unnatural, and my suspicions of Whitmore were so strong, that I was led into the belief of your being a creature of his, who betrayed yourself to me by over-acting your part, in striving to obtain my confidence ; and this was what made me so studious in avoiding any conversation with you on that, in my opinion, dangerous subject ; but now, Joseph, that I am convinced of my error, my whole heart is laid open to you in this acknowledgement, that I look on Whitmore as my enemy, and that I fear him, though I don't know how he can injure me." " And did you, Sir, did you indeed suspect me of?—" Joseph was proceeding, when his master stopped him, saying, " Ah ! do not destroy all your kindness,

ness, by reminding me of what I shall never cease to regret ; but I will not always make ungrateful returns, and henceforth we are friends." He extended his hand, which Joseph eagerly catching, pressed fervently to his breast, saying, " This moment is the prediction of old Joseph fulfilled, who used to say, the son of Mr. Henry will not be like a master, but a friend, for so his father was to my poor Tom." " Poor old man," cried Augustus, " he must have been the person who I remember, shedding tears over me, and calling me his young master, when my uncle Hopton brought me at a very early age to Marley Hall, where he afterwards informed me, I was denied admittance."

The carriage stopped, for they were now arrived at the stage, where they were to dine, and Joseph paid the most particular attention to his master and friend's accommodation ; after which they set out, and arrived in safety at their place of rest for the night ; they conversed freely on the affairs of
Marley

Marley Hall next day, Joseph giving full information of all he knew respecting Whitmore's conferences with Walter; and both agreeing in the opinion, that some plot was in embryo, though of what nature they could not discover; and thus the time passed on till they arrived about noon the third day at the university of Oxford in good health, and the most strict confidence of each other, without derogating in the least from the dignity of the master, or diminishing the respectful distance of the servant.

CHAP. II.

WHILE Augustus and his faithful Joseph were journeying to the seat of science, Lucy and Alicia arrived in safety, under the protection of Sir John Stanley, at the romantic abode of the venerable Mrs. Aubry. It was an ancient structure, built in addition to a castle still more ancient, which was now so much fallen into decay as to be no longer considered a part of the habitable building, and being nearly covered with ivy, gave the air of a ruin to the entire edifice, which however contained many comfortable, as well as elegant apartments, where

where many a highland chief had feasted in the days of feudal magnificence. It was built near the summit of a hill, and commanded in front a full view of Inverness and the sea, while from the back, a little above the house, and from the towers of the Castle, was an extensive view of the highlands.

The respectable mistress of the mansion having expected her young guests, was prepared to receive them; which she did with such a graceful familiarity, as displayed at once her own character, and removed from their minds every trace of the prejudice with which they had commenced their journey, and which increased to a degree of uneasiness as they approached the castle; where they expected to find a formal old lady sitting in state, and dealing out censures on the volatile manners of the present age, and encomiums on the reserve of that which was past; they dreaded to hear the sentiments of Sir Augustus, respecting low birth and degrading alliances, falling with two-fold as-

perity from the tongue of Mrs. Aubry, whom they had been told, spent her youth amidst the nobility of the realm, and even received her education at court. But how much, and how agreeably were they surprised, when instead of the repulsive figure their imaginations had pictured, they were met in the great hall by a venerable form, on which, though the hand of time had committed great depredations, the traces of extreme beauty were yet fully discernable. Mrs. Aubry had passed her sixtieth year, yet was neither debilitated in body or mind; she walked erect, and a benevolent smile lightened up her countenance as she advanced, and extending her hands to the young ladies, drew them to her, and saluted them with the cordiality of an old acquaintance, saying, "Welcome, my children,—welcome to Scotland." Then courtesying with great politeness to Sir John, whom the young ladies introduced, she led the way to a large and pleasant apartment, where the strangers were instantly served with refreshments.

ments. The day passed cheerfully away in the hospitable dwelling of Mrs. Aubry, where good humour and regularity presided; and the domestics seemed to perform their several offices, more from a motive of good will than duty.

When the company were about to separate for the night, Sir John Stanley offered to take his leave, purposing to set off at an early hour in the morning, to pay the intended visit to his estate; but the agreeable hostess opposed his intention in a manner so earnest and persuasive, that he was compelled to relinquish the design, and consent to spend a week at the Castle. "Don't imagine," said she, "that you will be condemned entirely to female society; for I assure you, my dear Sir, though I have long out-lived the charms of youth and beauty, there is not a gentleman within twenty miles round, but visits me; nay, boys of sixteen, and blooming youths of twenty, disdain not to pay their compliments to Mrs. Aubry.

You may smile at it, young ladies, but I assure you it is a fact, that one of the prettiest lads in Scotland tucks his plaid under his arm, and in the coldest mornings bounds across the hills like a young fawn, to visit me ; nor will you be surprised, when you see my lively Charles, that I should climb a pinnacle of the highest tower, to watch for his approach ; but I give you fair notice, that his heart is engaged, and it will be useless for you to contend for the prize which is already won ; therefore, if your affections are not secured, and left behind in England, keep a strict guard on them, or my young highlander may chance to take a captive ; too many——” Alicia blushed, and Lucy replied, “ Indeed, madam, it is by no means fair that you should monopolize the youth of the country to yourself ; you may take as many of the old as you please, but for my own part, I am resolved to spread out all my snares immediately ; and as you say the mountains afford something worth looking after, my first essay shall be on them.”—

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"Ah you vain creature," replied the old lady, "I defy your charms, for charm you ever so sweetly, you will not catch the heart of Charles Campbell." "I will try, at least," cried Lucy, as she left the room, preceded by Alicia. "What a delightful old woman," exclaimed the latter, as the sisters ascended the stairs to their apartments. "It is no wonder she should be beloved by those who know her," returned Lucy, "since I dote on her already."

Next morning Mrs. Aubry informed her guests, that she expected a large party to dinner. "They have been engaged for some time," said she, "to honour the arrival of the young English women, who come to sojourn amongst them; I have dispatched half a dozen messengers," added she, "with the glad tidings, and if my glass does not deceive me, Charles Campbell is already on his way hither."

She was perfectly right, and in half an hour a young gentleman, fully answering the idea she had given of him, entered the chamber. Mrs. Aubry arose to meet him, and he kissed her hand with great fervour. "This ladies," said she, "is my *dear* Charles. These, my son, are the young ladies I promised to introduce to you." He bowed to them most gracefully, and then went through the same form with Sir John Stanley. "I came thus early, madam," said the youth, "to inform you, that I have received a letter from England; my suit is granted, and I shall depart in few days, to join my regiment." "Where, child?" she asked. "In Flanders, madam," he replied. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and continued silent for some moments, then looking affectionately in his face, she said, "And ~~must~~ my sorrow for your absence be heightened by my fears for your life; ah! my dearest child, how shall I support the anguish of believing that I shall never see you more?" Tears of hopeless grief bedewed

dewed the faded cheeks of Mrs. Aubry, and the drops of pure sympathy burst from the bright eyes of the lovely Marleys. "Dearest, most revered of women," cried the youthful soldier, "restrain, I beseech you, this unavailing sorrow, and imbitter not what I account my good fortune, by the sad remembrance that it has cost your generous heart a pang; cheer up, my more than mother, and recollect that my fate is in the hands of a gracious God!" "Oh cease!" cried she, "or you will break my heart; I had hoped that all its trials were at an end; but, alas! I was deceived." She arose and left the room. After a silence of some length, during which Mr. Campbell appeared much agitated, he apologized to the strangers for the disturbance he had given the general tranquillity. "Pray, Sir," said Sir John Stanley, "are you nearly related to this amiable lady?" "Not in the least, Sir," replied the youth; "to friendship only, and her esteem for my parents, am I indebted for all her kindness; she is my god-mother,

and well has she fulfilled those promises which are in general held so lightly ; in short, Sir, she has done every thing but giving me birth."

Mrs. Aubry now returned, and resuming her seat, inquired with seeming composure, if the family would come to dinner. " Yes, madam," said Charles, " all but my father who is at Inverness." " And Maria Douglas," said Mrs. Aubry,— " Will come," replied Charles, " you know, madam, she must." Mrs. Aubry sighed, but changing the subject, she endeavoured to regain her cheerfulness, and entertain the expected company in her usual manner.

The family of Campbell arrived first, and consisted of Mrs. Campbell, Maria Douglas, her daughter by a former husband, and three sons and four daughters of Mr. Campbell's by a former wife, of whom Charles was the youngest. The lady, who was loaded with dress, seemed of a distant haughty

haughty temper, while the young people were all very much the contrary; the eldest of the gentlemen was only a visitor at his father's, having been some time married, and now come to take one of his sisters to Edinburgh, where he resided. The young ladies were all lively and agreeable, except Miss Douglas, who seemed to be a compound of gentleness and melancholy; she too was over-dressed, and seemed in great awe of her mother, whose eye was never off her during the whole day. Several other people of distinction, in all making forty, sat down to dinner, which was in every respect suitable to the company. The honourable Mr. Murray, a gentleman of about thirty, and most splendidly dressed, was the last who arrived, and Mrs. Aubry whispered the Marleys, that he was the destined husband of Miss Douglas who was a very rich heiress. — Dinner being ended, the whole party adjourned to another room, where music awaited them, and soon after they commenced dancing;

Miss Douglas gave her almost lifeless hand to Mr. Murray and Alicia Marley accepted that of the captivating Charles. This amusement was continued till near eleven o'clock, when the company sat down to supper, and as it was summer, and the nights light, they did not separate till after twelve.

The following day brought cards of invitation for Mrs. Aubry and her guests from all the families who had been at the Castle the preceding one; they were all accepted; and thus was near a fortnight dedicated to conviviality. Sir John Stanley however reluctantly was obliged to give up the greater part of it, and left the Castle on the day appointed, with the equipage of Sir Augustus Marley, which was to convey him back to England; and the young ladies wrote both to their grandfather and brother, to acquaint them of their health, and the happiness of their situation.

The

The apparent melancholy under which Miss Douglas laboured, excited the curiosity of the Marleys, and Lucy ventured to ask Mrs. Awbry if she knew the cause of it. "Too well, my dear," replied the amiable old lady; "a tender attachment has long subsisted between her and my poor Charles; and her mother, who is the most tyrannic woman upon earth, opposes it with all her authority, and has actually engaged the unhappy girl to another; she has even fixed the day of marriage at the distance of three months; to avoid which, and I believe in the hope of getting rid of an existence, which is rendered miserable by this determination, Charles Campbell, one of the handsomest and most amiable youths existing, has solicited and obtained a commission in the army, which he is about to join in Flanders, as you heard him inform me. Thus are two young people, who may be exquisitely happy, made compleatly the reverse, for no other cause than that *he* is deficient in what *she* possesses abundantly—riches—accursed riches, the bane

bane of all earthly felicity." "Alas!" cried Alicia, "how my heart bleeds for this ill-fated pair; poor Maria, will she not break her heart?" "Yes," replied Mrs. Aubry, "her fate is very evident; and my poor boy, whom I took when an infant from the arms of his expiring mother,—my dear, my ever lamented Harriet Woodvill." Mrs. Aubry wept, and the young ladies, grieved at having awakened feelings so tender, entreated her forgiveness. "My dear young friends," said she, "you are under an error that I must remove; it is not your inquiries that have given rise to these emotions; they are the effusions of sorrow, long, very long, an inmate of this breast; for many years I have been in the habit of suppressing it, and assuming a cheerfulness which I do not feel, lest I should be banished from society; and it is an indulgence, it is a luxury which I have only dared to enjoy in private, thus to give it utterance; some other time I will inform you fully of its original source, at present I will only say, that the mother of those
young

young people, whom you think so agreeable, was the daughter of my love ; mistake me not, I never was a mother ; she was bequeathed to me, recommended to my care, by one who was dearer to me than existence ; for her sake I did what the world could not else have bribed me to. At an early age Mr. Campbell, the descendant of an illustrious house, solicited her hand ; he loved her, and she was sensible of his merits ; I consulted her interest, and finding that she was not averse to the union, and knowing too well that misery is often the companion of strong attachments, I resolved to secure her peace, by putting her out of danger—I gave her to him, and they were happy. My Harriet bore seven children, all of whom you have seen. Charles was the last, and she survived his birth but a month. I reared him, and it was with my consent his father married a second time ; for his circumstances were inadequate to the support of so numerous a family, in the stile he was accustomed to, and Mrs. Douglas brought him a large fortune ;

fortune ; but, alas ! she brought disquiet with it ; her temper is scarcely bearable, and her cruel treatment of her daughter, who is wholly in her power ; and my poor dear boy has compleated all, and robbed me of my last comfort, by sending him away." The old lady ceased, and the sisters again expressed their pity for the hapless lovers.

The ladies continued to fulfil their engagements at the houses of the neighbouring gentry, and passed their time as happily as Mrs. Aubry's sorrow, at the approaching separation from her young favourite, would admit, when one night, on their return from a party, they were informed by the domestics, that two gentlemen, who had brought letters from Sir John Stanley, were in the parlour ; that they had offered them refreshments, which were accepted, and they had now just done supper. " You have acted extremely well," said Mrs. Aubry ; " any friends of Sir John's are welcome here ; have the gentlemen many attendants ?"

" Only

“ Only one, madam,” replied a domestic, “ who informs us that the rest are left at Inverness, from whence the gentlemen came on horseback.”

Mrs. Aubry and the young ladies now entered the chamber, where the strangers were and two very genteel looking young men arose and saluted them, acknowledging, with a profusion of thanks, the hospitality with which they had been treated. Mrs. Aubry replied that she was happy her domestics had acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of any of Sir John Stanley's friends, as she entertained a very high esteem for that gentleman, who she hoped was well. “ Perfectly so, madam,” replied one of the gentlemen; “ we were so happy as to meet with him on his return to England; and informing him of the route we were to take, he gave us a letter of introduction here, on the credit of which we presumed to wait on you.” So saying, he took from his pocket-book a letter, which he presented to her. Mrs. Aubry retired

retired to a side table, to peruse it ; during which time the eyes of the strangers were riveted with the most seeming admiration on the two young ladies, who, unused to undergo so strict a scrutiny, felt and looked extremely abashed. Mrs. Aubry having gone through the letter, making an obeisance to him who had delivered it, " Sir Charles Denby, Sir," said she, " is the appellation by which I am to know you." He bowed profoundly. " And Mr. Harcourt," said she, turning to the other ; " you're extremely welcome, gentlemen," she continued, " but I lament that not one of my male friends are at present here to entertain you as I could wish, and which we females shall, I fear, be unsuccessful in." " That, madam," replied Sir Charles, " is by no means a circumstance to be regretted by us, but very much the contrary ; as it is impossible we could be happier than in the company of such agreeable ladies." " If we were capable of forming a wish beyond the present circle," added Mr. Harcourt, " we should be wholly

wholly unworthy of the good fortune we enjoy." The ladies bowed their thanks for the compliment, and a general conversation took place; in the course of which the gentlemen displayed an extensive knowledge of the world; were very happy in their manner of expression, and seemed desirous of making themselves agreeable; they also took an opportunity of discovering that they were making a tour of Scotland, and meant to be particular in their observations on the Highlands, and the country most contiguous to them; which led to an invitation from Mrs. Aubry, to make her house their principal home; and they joyfully accepted the offer, declaring how happy they should be in the enjoyment of such delightful society.

They now separated for the night, and the Marleys remarked to each other, that there was a strange mixture of boldness in the otherways agreeable manners of the gentlemen. "I never felt myself so awkwardly embarrassed in all my life," said Alicia, "as
under

under their ardent and continued gaze, while Mrs. Aubry was withdrawn from us."

"Nor I," cried Lucy; "I declare I was afraid of them for an instant." "Are not the features of Sir Charles very familiar to you?" said Alicia. "Yes," replied Lucy; "I thought to have made the same remark to you; and though it is very certain that I never beheld Sir Charles Denby before to-night, it is equally clear to me, that I know a face extremely like him, but where I can't recollect." "I don't like his face," said Alicia, "there is an expression of something very wicked in it; but Harcourt." "Yes, indeed Harcourt," added Lucy, "is very handsome." "I wonder, if he is married," cried Alicia, archly, as she retired.

Sir Charles Denby was a tall, well made man, of about twenty-five years of age; his complexion dark, his features long, and strongly marked; his eyes bright and penetrating, and altogether a most strikingly pleasing figure.

Mr.

Mr. Harcourt was younger than his companion, and not so tall, but extremely well formed, which he seemed very conscious of; his features were very handsome, particularly his eyes and teeth, and his complexion naturally clear, was not less pleasing from being a little sun-burnt.

Such were the men who presented themselves before the young unexperienced Marleys, and possessed of the most consummate art, and insinuating address, employed both in endeavouring to make an impression on their hearts. Mr. Harcourt attached himself to Lucy; he seemed deeply struck by her charms, and in a sort of desponding manner, as if involved in doubts and fears, without making any declaration, gave her the most evident and unequivocal proofs of a passion, as violent as it was sudden. She was alarmed—she was astonished; yet could not find that she was greatly displeased. Sir Charles was bolder in his advances to Alicia; he appeared confident in his own merit, and
not

not forgetful of his rank, when he took an opportunity of saying to her, that it was a great pity so lovely a girl should be so much secluded from the world ; and that he, if he could believe himself so happy as to please her, would rejoice in bestowing rank and title on one who was so eminently qualified to adorn both. “ Our acquaintance is but short, it must be confessed,” he added, “ for such a declaration ; but we will know each other better, and then my charming Alicia—” She was covered with blushes, yet had framed what she considered as a proper reply, which she was about to make, when an unlucky interruption compelled her to be silent.

Two days the strangers passed at the Castle, without any other company than Charles Campbell, who dined there the second day, and was viewed with a jealous eye by both gentlemen. Lucy was in earnest conversation with him, in a low voice, when a melancholy glance, accompanied by a deep sigh

figh from Harcourt, threw her into confusion ; and though she wished not to give any encouragement to a man who was an utter stranger to her, yet the natural tenderness of her heart, would not permit her to proceed in what she could not but perceive gave him pain.

Mrs. Aubry's affability soon dissipated the reserve which the gentlemen at first assumed, and a few hours made her mistress of what she thought their secret ; she saw that Sir Charles admired Alicia ; she followed the eyes of Harcourt, and saw them rest on Lucy with unutterable tenderness. She was not in the least surpris'd, but felt unaccountably alarmed, and resolv'd to declare her sentiments to her fair charge, as soon as possible.

On the evening of the second day, Mrs. Aubry remind'd the young ladies, that the following day was that appointed for Mr. Murray's ball, and told the gentlemen that she would be happy in introducing them on
that

that occasion, to a large circle of her acquaintance, as they should accompany her and the Miss Marleys to Mr. Murray's; they, however, declined this honour, as not being supplied with dress suitable to such a party, and declared their intention of beginning their excursions in the morning, which they accordingly put in execution, and set off at an early hour.

After the travellers were gone, Mrs. Aubry declared her opinion to the young ladies, that they had captivated the hearts of their new acquaintances. Alicia replied, that Sir Charles had been very explicit with her, but that she was at a loss how to act, as her most positive rejection of his suit did not prevent him from persisting; and that he alarmed her, by hinting at an application to Sir Augustus Marley. "And do you actually dislike him, my love?" said the old lady. "Most decidedly, madam," replied Alicia. "And Mr. Harcourt, my dear," said she, turning to Lucy, "is
equally

equally disagreeable to you." "I have not said so," replied Lucy; "however, if I have made any impression, he has left me to discover it by my own sagacity." "Which needs not be very great," said Mrs. Aubry, "to find him out, but we will speak of this hereafter."

CHAP. III.

ACCORDING to engagement, Mrs. Aubry and her fair guests repaired to Mr. Murray's, where they met a numerous company, and were elegantly entertained. All the family of Campbell, except Charles, were present; and Miss Douglas, who seem-

ed to be the principal object of the entertainment, from the conspicuous point of view in which Mr. Murray's unremitting attentions placed her, appeared unusually cheerful, which was remarked by Alicia to Mrs. Aubry with surprise. "Dear madam," said she, "is it not strange that Miss Douglas should appear much happier in the absence of the amiable Charles, than ever I beheld her in his presence." "It is so," replied Mrs. Aubry, "alas! poor thing, perhaps she has resigned herself to her fate, and enjoys a degree of placidity from the conflict being past, as well as from being spared by his absence, the painful restraint which she was obliged to observe in her behaviour towards him, under the eye of her watchful mother."

Next morning the ladies being left entirely to themselves, Mrs. Awbry resumed the discourse of the preceding day, respecting the strangers, whose short visit seemed likely to be attended with permanent consequences to
one

one or both of her young friends ; and after remarking, in a half jesting manner, on that kind of fate which seemed to govern matrimonial engagements more than any other occurrence in life, proceeded with great seriousness to expatiate on the danger of indulging the softer passions ; which though more amiable in appearance, were in effect equally destructive of peace with the most turbulent.

“ To you, my dear Lucy,” said she, “ I chiefly address myself ; attend, therefore, to the caution which friendship and experience offers. Mr. Harcourt is of a form eminently pleasing ; his manners too, for what we have seen, are also agreeable ; and you have evidently made an impression on his heart, which though too powerful to be concealed, he has forbore to avow. It is true indeed your acquaintance is of so short a date as scarcely to countenance such a proceeding ; yet since it was long enough to produce such an effect, we may naturally conclude, if there was not some very powerful reason to the contrary, it was also of sufficient length to

produce a declaration ; the truth of which observation is fully demonstrated in the conduct of his friend towards your sister. Perhaps then Mr. Harcourt is married, or under such other circumstances as would render his addresses to you equally dishonorable ; but from whatever cause his silence proceeds, there is no further proof necessary to shew that it would be highly imprudent in you to indulge any sentiment of tenderness, which his uncommon qualifications may have awakened ; but on the contrary, that it behoves you to take instant measures to eradicate it, while yet in infancy ; for believe me, if it becomes once matured, you will find the task extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be accomplished.” “ Dear madam,” cried Lucy, “ how you alarm me ; but if I have any knowledge of my heart, though I certainly admire Mr. Harcourt, I am very far from entertaining any sentiment for him that could be construed into love.” “ I sincerely hope so,” returned Mrs. Aubry, adding with uncommon energy, “ for the female

who once admits that fatal passion to possess her mind, will never know repose. No, not even though she should be loved with equal fervor." Lucy drew back, and gazed on her—Alicia sighed. "You doubt the truth of this assertion, my dear girls," said Mrs. Aubry. "Indeed," replied Lucy, "I candidly confess my opinion ever has been, that the happiness arising from a mutual attachment, even though it were attended with a few difficulties, was ever more than sufficient to counterbalance those inquietudes which I have heard attributed to the tender passion; and if in the end an union is effected, no state of earthly happiness can be so perfect, as that enjoyed by the pair who are thus united; but you, madam, have hinted, that you speak from experience, with which the fragile opinions of youth are not to be put in competition." "True, my dear," returned Mrs. Aubry; "experience is the book of truth, where we may read, but, alas! too late, that the lot of human nature is affliction. In the hope, however,

that my share of experience may be profitable to you and my Alicia, by making you cautious how you trust your peace to so precarious a security as the faith of man, I will, when I have finished the transcript of it, which has employed me for some time, submit to your perusal the history of my life ; the prime of which has been wasted in the anxieties of an ardent, and, in all appearance, mutual passion ; and, finally, rendered miserable by disappointment."

The remembrance of her former life always revived in the mind of Mrs. Aubry, ideas so painful as to oblige her to retire, and seek relief by indulging a flow of tears ; she had scarcely quitted the room for this purpose, when a domestic hastily entered, exclaiming, the gentlemen are returned, and one of them, Mr. Harcourt, is killed. Alicia and Lucy ran into the hall, where they found the servants all assembled, and some of them bearing in their arms the seemingly lifeless Mr. Harcourt, while his friend, Sir

Charles

Charles Denby, rung his hands, and cried out continually, " Oh heavens ! what shall I do ? how shall I ever see his friends ? how be able to break to them his melancholy fate ? an only, darling son,—the heir of immense possessions." Then perceiving the young ladies, he exclaimed, " Oh ladies ! see the amiable Harcourt, cut off in the bloom of youth—snatched from a family that idolized him,—his poor mother will run mad,—his uncle, alas ! alas ! who now will be heir to the wealth he designed for his adopted son."

The sisters approached the body of Mr. Harcourt ; his face was disfigured with blood and dirt ; Lucy looked on him in mournful silence ; Alicia wept ; Mrs. Aubry, who had been acquainted with the sad catastrophe, now entered the hall, and passing Sir Charles Denby, who would have detained her with a repetition of his lamentations, she cast a look of pity upon Harcourt. " Ill-fated youth," she cried, taking

his hand, then exclaiming, “ he lives ! Sir Charles, he lives ! who knows but we yet may save him ; quick, bear him to a bed, and let his wounds be sought for, while I select some balsams of sovereign efficacy.” The hall was quickly cleared ; Mr. Harcourt was carried up to his chamber, and the young ladies returned to the parlour, where they were soon after joined by Mrs. Aubry, loaded with drugs of various qualities ; on the virtues of each she averred that volumes might be written ; and was proceeding to explain some, when Sir Charles entered, and informed her, that to his utmost astonishment, after the strictest scrutiny, there could be no wound discovered on the body of his friend but one on the side of his head, from which the blood had proceeded, and which appeared to be little more than a scratch. “ Then, I fear,” cried the skilful lady, “ he has received a fracture, and we had better lose no time in sending for a surgeon.” “ I believe so,” replied Sir Charles, “ but will you be so good as to examine his head ; perhaps you
may

may be able to ascertain the truth, and relieve me from the agony of suspense I am labouring under." "I will endeavour," said Mrs. Aubry, and hurried up stairs, leaving Sir Charles with the ladies. He paced the room with folded arms, wrapped in silent sorrow, when Lucy at length inquired how the accident had happened, which seemed to threaten such fatal consequences. Sir Charles deeply sighing, thus replied, "Fate, or somewhat like it, conducted us to a spot from whence we could discern this Castle, with the view of which we cheered our drooping spirits; for instead of finding amusement in our excursion, we passed carelessly along, and sunk deeper and deeper into melancholy musings; the farther we removed from this scene of enchantment, where we seemed to have left our souls; we rambled on however, without any particular direction, but leaving all to chance, when a steep rock attracted the notice of Harcourt, and he proposed that we should attempt to climb to its summit. I saw that it

was impracticable, and told him so; he persisted, however, and said, he would run all hazards to catch another glimpse of Mrs. Aubry's Castle, which he believed he could from the top of the rock; he accordingly began to climb, calling on me to follow, and had ascended about ten feet, when he slipped, and tumbled to the bottom. Alarmed beyond expression, I hastened to his assistance, and found him in the state you have beheld. I was nearly frantic, and knew not what to do, when fortunately some peasants appearing at a little distance, the servant hollowed to them, and they came to us. I inquired if there was any house near, and felt a degree of comfort, when they replied, that by a path with which they were acquainted, we might reach this place in a short time. The humane peasants lifted my poor friend from the earth; one of them led the way, and in mournful procession we wound round the bases of the hills for about an hour, when we arrived."

Sir

Sir Charles ceased, and the ladies expressed their concern for the fatal accident ; yet encouraged an hope that the case was not so dangerous as their apprehensions had pointed to. This was confirmed by Mrs. Aubry, who soon after entered, and with a smile declared all was well ; that she had examined the wound, which was a mere trifle, on which she laid a plaister which would soon heal it ; that by the application of some drops she had been so fortunate as to recover him from the stupor, into which he had been thrown by the shock of so great a fall ; that as soon as he had opened his eyes he shewed signs of reason, for that he knew, and articulated her name. “ I have given him a composing draught,” added the good old lady, “ and left him to that repose which I trust in heaven will compleatly restore him to us and his family.” “ Best of women !” exclaimed Sir Charles, in a transport of joy, and snatching her hand to his lips, “ eternal blessings on you for the happy tidings ; oh ! did you know how much depends on Har-

court's life ; what confusion his death would create ; a princely fortune would fall to hospitals and poor houses, a title would be extinct, beside the affliction that would overwhelm his friends at the loss of so fine and amiable a young man." " Pray, Sir," said Mrs. Aubry, " is he descended from the Harcourts of Devonshire ?" " Pardon me, madam," replied Sir Charles, " if I am silent on that point at present—some family matters—a projected marriage that my friend did not approve of." " Excuse me, Sir," cried Mrs. Aubry, interrupting him, " I meant not to pry into secrets when I asked the question ; but happening to know a respectable family of that name, I thought your friend might be a member of it ; but it can be of no consequence to me." " It may hereafter, my dear madam," replied Sir Charles ; " for should Harcourt recover as I now have good hopes he will,—I foresee somewhat, which at present I will not mention." He smiled, and looked on Lucy who returned a glance of such ineffable disdain

dain as compleatly silenced him, and put an end to those insinuations with which his whole discourse was fraught, and which she too well understood.

The invalid, as Mrs. Aubry had predicted, rested well, and awoke next morning so much recovered as to be able to leave his bed. The most tender care was bestowed on him, by order of the hospitable mistress of the mansion, who frequently visited him herself, to see that her orders were strictly obeyed. He appeared highly grateful for her kindness, but seemed to labour under a depression of spirits, which she strove in vain to dissipate, and said she would send Sir Charles to keep him company, as it was hurtful to him to be alone.

“ Sir Charles !” repeated Harcourt, with a sigh, “ would to heaven I had never seen him ! but it is now too late to retract.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Aubry was quitting the room as he spoke this in a low voice ; but she heard it very distinctly, and repeated it to her young friends, who concluded that Sir Charles, whom they both agreed to be a wicked looking man, had led him into some error, which he reflected on with sorrow and contrition. Mrs. Aubry joined them in opinion, and added, that Sir Charles had affected an air of mystery respecting the young man's family, which she thought boded no good ; and doubted not but a little time would discover to them somewhat for which Harcourt would appear to be an object of much pity, or much blame.

The following day Mr. Harcourt was so well, that he requested permission to join the ladies in the drawing-room, which being granted, he made his appearance, and thanked them very gracefully for the indulgence, repeating to Mrs. Aubry, with great energy, the sense he had of her goodness, and the deep impression it had made on his heart.

She

She besought him not to oppress her with acknowledgements, which far exceeded the little acts of common humanity which he had received in her house, and begged that he would make use of a sofa, which she pointed to, as a resting place, if he found himself fatigued, after leaving his bed-chamber. He thanked her, and after chatting for some time very agreeably, availed himself of the permission he had received, to rest his graceful form on the sofa.

He was thus situated, and Sir Charles had been some time absent from the room, when Mr. Archibald Campbell, the elder brother of Charles, was announced. After he had paid his compliments to the ladies, Mrs. Aubry introduced him to her sick guest, and related the accident which had happened. Mr. Campbell remarked that the gentleman had a very happy escape, and was congratulating him on the safety of his limbs, when the door opened, and Sir Charles made his appearance. He started back, and turned

pale. Mr. Campbell sprang towards him, exclaiming vehemently, "Infamous scoundrel, what brings you here?" then catching him by the collar, added, "Villain! though you have eluded the punishment of the law, I will at least have the satisfaction of kicking you." "By heaven it is just!" exclaimed Harcourt, and darted from the chamber, while the ladies, seized with consternation, stared on each other with trembling apprehension. Sir Charles, somewhat recovered from his surprise, attempted to shew some resentment, and stammered out the rudeness of such behaviour in the presence of ladies, and that he would find a proper time to call Mr. Campbell to account for it. "Wretch!" cried that gentleman, "declare what brought you to their presence, or I will make you such an example as shall be an eternal warning to all your fraternity—speak! confess!" "Never," replied Sir Charles, "and strike me at your peril."

Mrs.

Mrs. Aubry now furiously rang the bell, and two or three servants appearing, Mr. Campbell bade some of them secure Harcourt, and shut the doors, while he assisted in forcing Sir Charles from the room, and lodging him in the dungeon of the Castle. He then returned to Mrs. Aubry, and requested that the plate, and every thing of value should be examined ; for that the fellow, who called himself Sir Charles Denby, was a notorious sharper, and had been detected lately in some very villainous deceptions, by a set of gentlemen at Edinburgh, of which he was one ; but that the practices they had discovered, though very vile indeed, unhappily did not come under the cognizance of the law. He added, that he had never seen Harcourt before, but supposed him to be of the same stamp of his companion. “ Doubtless,” cried Mrs. Aubry, “ and they came hither with a design to rob, or perhaps something worse.” She shuddered. “ Good God !” cried Alicia, “ how they must have imposed on Sir John

Stanly

Stanly, to obtain a letter of introduction from him." "That's an odd circumstance indeed," replied Mr. Campbell; "but, pray what does Sir John say of them? does he mention them as acquaintances?"

Mrs. Aubry now produced the letter, in which, to their utter astonishment, Sir Charles Denby and Mr. Harcourt were named as the particular friends of Sir John Stanley, with whom he had been so happy as to meet on his way to England.

"Amazement!" cried Mr. Campbell. "You have made a mistake, my dear Archibald," replied Mrs. Aubry, "and Sir Charles bears a strong resemblance to the sharper you assisted in detecting at Edinburgh." "Impossible!" said he, "the features of the fellow may resemble those of a gentleman, but the ashy paleness that overspread them, as he entered the room, and saw me, fully proves that I am right."

A servant now appeared, and declared, that after the most diligent search, neither Mr. Harcourt, nor the man who attended the strangers as a servant, could be found ; and that on entering the stables, they had discovered that two of the horses were gone, and that which Sir Charles rode was left behind. On further inquiry it appeared that nothing was missing, at least of any value ; and after a consultation, the prisoner was again led into the drawing room. Mrs. Aubry besought him to inform her what design had brought him to her house, promising that as it happily was unexecuted, she would forbear to seek for any further punishment on him, than that which had been already inflicted, in exposing him to her domestics as an impostor. “ You cannot punish me, madam,” said he, “ for I have not injured you,—neither did I intend it ; I acknowledge myself indebted to your hospitality, for which I most heartily return you my thanks, and request I may now be set at liberty. For you, Sir,” said he, to Mr. Campbell,

Campbell, "perhaps we may meet again, when I shall certainly remember what has happened here." "And I," returned Mr. Campbell, "shall not forget it, but will set it down as another step towards the gallows, whither I perceive you are posting fast." Sir Charles frowned with well affected indignation and retired. The servants were ordered to give him his horse, and see him fairly off, while Mrs. Aubry and her friends re-perused Sir John Stanly's letter, and vainly strove to reconcile its contents with the discovery made by Mr. Campbell. That gentleman at length proposed writing to Sir John, of whose honor he could entertain no doubts, from the intimacy with, and confidence reposed in him by Sir Augustus Marley.

Mr. Campbell now said, that he had come purposely to the castle, to prepare Mrs. Aubry for the farewell visit of his sister and brother Charles, who were to set off with him at an early hour in the morning
for

for Edinburgh. "My dear child is going then," said she, deeply sighing; "I shall never see him more, but I resign him to the care of heaven!"

Soon after the young lady and gentleman arrived, and Mrs. Aubry endeavoured to appear composed, but was frequently obliged to retire to weep. After dinner she gave the young lady, who was going to enter upon what would appear to her a new world, a store of good advice. "And you, my young foldier," said she, turning to Charles, "condescend to be counselled by a woman; in whatever dangers you may encounter, never lose sight of the strict rules of duty; obey them to the utmost of your power; but if so circumstanced as to be obliged to act from your own judgment, let not a vain desire of fame lead you into unnecessary acts of valour; bravery is the highest commendation of a foldier, but rashness is beneath the dignity of man; avoid it, as you would the name of coward." Charles kissed her hand,

hand, and said he would be mindful of her advice, then begged she would permit him to remain at the Castle all night. "I cannot return to my father's," said he, "for there is one under his roof, whom I must not see till better times." Mr. Campbell and his sister therefore departed, after appointing a place of meeting with Charles in the morning on the road. Mrs. Aubry seemed pleased that her beloved child should remain with her a little longer; but when they were about to separate for the night, and, as she said, for ever, all her fortitude seemed exhausted, and she was compelled to weep aloud after she had embraced and given him her maternal blessing. When all had retired to their apartments, a soft tap at Alicia's door summoned her to open it. She did so, and found Charles Campbell waiting. "Will you, dear Miss Marley, pardon my rudeness," he cried, "and return with me for a moment to the parlour?" She readily consented; he then told her, that in his parting moments with Mrs. Aubry, he had
not

not courage to relate a circumstance for which he feared she would blame him severely. "I have been," he continued, "these three days the husband of Maria Douglas. Inform my dear mother of it as tenderly as you can; and entreat her, when the storm bursts on my adored Maria's head, to take her to her sheltering bosom; 'till then, the matter rests a secret." "You astonish me," cried Alicia, "but I shall be happy to oblige you." "May heaven bless you," said he, "and dear amiable Miss Marley; impute not imprudence to my gentle girl; she is pure as angels, and her plighted faith was not to be recalled; neither could our hearts be disunited by human power." He led Alicia to her chamber door, and bidding her an affectionate adieu, left her, and departed at the dawn of day.

CHAP. IV.

MRS. AUBRY met her young friends at breakfast, with a countenance which plainly indicated the sort of night she had passed, and Alicia perceiving that her dejection was of that deep, torpid nature, as would, in all probability, if not speedily removed, prey upon her health, resolved, after a little conversation, to inform her, at once, of Mr. Campbell's marriage ; and thus by leading her thoughts to a new subject, though not a pleasing one, prevent her from dwelling too intensely on that, which appeared so acute as to have deprived her of the power

power of resisting its effects, and reduced her to an alarming state of despondence.

To this disclosure Lucy incontinently led the way, by naming Miss Douglas as a person in whose fate she was greatly interested. Mrs. Aubry sighed, and Alicia took the opportunity offered of discovering the important secret. Mrs. Aubry listened in silent astonishment, and when Alicia ceased speaking, exclaimed, "Rash, unhappy boy! miserable girl! now indeed may you expect misfortunes to be multiplied upon you." "Dear madam," cried Alicia, "why do you suppose misfortune to be the certain result of an union, formed on principles so just as theirs. Strongly attached to each other, and bound by a vow solemnly interchanged in the face of heaven, is it not more likely that they would entail misfortune on themselves, by its violation? what misery indeed may not those expect who, so engaged, dare to carry falsehood to the altar, and for the sake of some worldly advantage,

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pledge their faith for the performance of what they know to be impossible ; vainly thinking, perhaps, that if their conduct in all other respects is good, such an act may be overlooked ; but though it may in this world even be commended as the effects of prudence and good sense ; yet the moment must arrive when it can be no longer palliated ; when it must be accounted for to him, from whom no secrets are hidden.” “ You are an enthusiast in this cause, my dear Alicia,” said Mrs. Aubry ; “ and it must be acknowledged that religion and morality are on your side ; but will you allow nothing to the authority of parents ? are we not bound to honor them, and shall we, in direct opposition to their commands, dispose of ourselves in marriage, and frustrate all their plans, the work perhaps of years, for our advantage ; can such a marriage prosper ?” “ Certainly not,” replied Alicia, “ for if it is contracted merely for the sake of opposition to those whom God and nature point out to us as objects of veneration, it then becomes

bècomes a crime, and unacceptable in the sight of heaven ! but you know, my dear madam, that parental authority, as well as all others, may be overstrained ; and if a parent requires of a child the performance of an act which reason, religion, or the laws of the country censure ; in that case disobedience becomes a virtue.” “ Much may be said on both sides,” replied Mrs. Aubry, “ and we will leave the subject for the discussion of more able arguers ; but in the present case, whatever may be urged in their favour, nothing is more clear to me, than that the young people in question have acted very imprudently ; and I tremble for the consequences ; for should the mother of Miss Douglas withhold her fortune, as she has the power of doing, the unhappy pair will be totally destitute of support ; since a few hundred pounds, perhaps, beside a subaltern’s commission, is all the dependance of poor Charles, the circumstances of his father being, as I mentioned to you before, far from affluent ; add to this the probabi-

lity of the poor youth never returning, and the prospects of Maria are dismal indeed."

"But he will return," cried Lucy, who had hitherto been silent; "he will return with rank, with honor,—the pride of his wife, the boast of his country; and though it is possible he may never be rich, we have many proofs that riches are not absolutely necessary to constitute happiness, though a clear conscience is. Maria will therefore be happy; and who shall say she has acted wrong, when blessed with competence, content, and the affections of an amiable man, the husband of her choice." "If all this comes to pass," said Mrs. Aubry. "If," replied Lucy; "tell me not of ifs; is it not as probable, nay more, than your gloomy picture; and why should we choose the dark and dismal shades of despondence, when a view more pleasing, bright with the sunshine of hope is equally within our reach." "Such," replied Mrs. Aubry, "are ever the sanguine expectations of youth; alas! how often are they proved to be fallacious; but

but I'll not discourage you, my amiable girls; disappointment and sorrow come too soon; let us therefore be happy while we can, and leave the future to heaven; is not that your plan, my Lucy?" "Exactly," she replied. "Come then, dearest madam, the morning is fine; let us enjoy it in the open air; it will enliven our spirits."

The good old lady indulged her, and they walked round the ruined fortifications of the Castle.

"In the feudal times," said Mrs. Aubry, "this was a strong fortress, and was the scene of many battles; it belonged to a distant branch of the royal house of Bruce, and at length descended to an heiress, who was the mother of my husband, and he leaving no child, it reverts, on my death, to the heirs of another female of the family, who was first cousin to my mother-in-law, and married a gentleman named Stuart, who has

a numerous family ; and as well as I can learn, is very impatient to be put in possession ; but he must wait the will of heaven. It is given out, that this place was built by enchantment, and inhabited for many years by a forcerefs of great reputation ; she was a kinswoman and favourer of the famous Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, who being worsted in battle by Edward the First, of England (the consequence of which was the forfeiture of his crown) was driven to great distress, and wandered about in disguise, attended by two faithful friends, the Earl of Lenox and Gilbert Hay ; when this lady discovering, by virtue of her art, where the monarch and his friends were, met them as they crossed a wild heath, and taking the three together in her arms, bore them thro' the air hither, when setting them down, the walls of this Castle instantly arose, and inclosed the spot where they stood. Here, the legend adds, the king remained in security, and such perfect secrecy, that the place of
his

his concealment was never suspected, till the efforts of his friends proved successful, in raising a strong party in his favour, when he issued forth, and once more assumed the royal dignity."

"Truly, madam," said Alicia, smiling, "this is a good story, and worthy of being handed down to posterity; but is it possible that such a tale could ever gain belief." "O the most perfect," replied Mrs. Aubry; "but you must observe, my dear, that Scotland has been a country ever fruitful in wizards and warlocks. I could tell you many pretty stories of this nature, which I have learned during my retirement here; one in particular, of a lady who possessed a magic ring, through which having looked, she saw her husband, who was in the king's army, wounded and led captive to Inverness."

Mrs. Aubry was interrupted by the appearance of a servant, who presented her a

letter, which on opening and reading a few lines, she turned pale, and trembling extremely, seized the arm of Lucy, by which she supported herself into the house.

Greatly alarmed, the sisters alternately entreated to know what was the matter; but she was incapable of replying, till having wept, she reperused the letter, and turning to the young ladies, "The death of those we have long esteemed," said she, "though convinced that they are gone to a better world, cannot fail of awakening feelings of regret, however unavailing. Alas! my children, I have sad tidings to relate to you. The noble minded venerable Sir Augustus Marley is no more."

Deeply impressed with affection and respect for their grandfather, the Miss Marleys received the news of his death with unfeigned concern, and paid to his memory the tribute of tears genuine and sincere.

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The letter which announced this event, came from Mr. Elwood, and inform'd Mrs. Aubry, that Sir Augustus had retired to bed in seeming health, and was found by his servant dead in the morning; and that it was conjectured he had been seized with a fit, which for want of assistance, terminated his life; a circumstance, which, though unforeseen, and of course unavoidable, added most painful sensations to those usually felt by the surviving friends.

Mr. Elwood further added, that he had, at the request of Mr. Whitmore, who was overwhelmed with affliction, sent off express for Mr. Marley, now Sir Augustus, to Oxford, whose arrival was hourly expected at the hall, after which Mr. Elwood promised to acquaint the young ladies with every particular that should occur worthy of their attention; in the mean time he requested of them, in lamenting the loss of a worthy parent and protector, not to forget that they

would find an ample substitute in the person of an amiable brother.

This reflection was indeed a source of true consolation, which they gratefully acknowledged to heaven, while they arrayed themselves according to custom, in deep mourning.

Mrs. Aubry assumed the same garb, as did her entire household ; and all the neighbouring families paid visits of condolence to her and her amiable guests.

Far different were the scene which passed at Marley-Hall : On the discovery of her father's death, Mrs. Whitmore broke out into the most extravagant exclamations of grief, while her husband, after holding consultation with his trusty Walter, sent for Mr. Elwood, as the particular friend of the young heir, and requested of that gentleman to give all necessary orders till the arrival

rival of the new master of the hall, declaring that his own deep affliction deprived him of all power to act in any capacity but that of a mourner :

“ For I have lost,” said he, clasping his hands, “ the best of friends and of fathers ! Oh ! Mr. Elwood, I never shall forget him,—never shall remember this fatal day without the most heartfelt sorrow.”

The good divine thinking it his duty to endeavour at moderating Mr. Whitmore’s uncommon affliction, said every thing which reason usually dictates on such occasions, and that failing, he had recourse to the arguments of religion, in which he clearly proved, that immoderate grief, particularly for the dead, was extremely sinful, inasmuch as it was murmuring at the decrees of the Almighty ; but all arguments were equally ineffectual with Mr. Whitmore, who resolved against receiving comfort or consolation. Mr. Elwood therefore gave up the point, and

prepared for the reception of his favourite Augustus, who, attended by Joseph, arrived just at the closing in of night, and at a moment when Mrs. Whitmore, jealous of the parson's interference, had sent for him to her apartment, to insist on some particulars respecting her father's funeral.

Augustus being informed that Mr. Elwood was gone up stairs, proceeded thither also, and entering a room, the door of which stood open, was saluted with a loud shriek, and an exclamation, from his aunt, of, "Oh! here he is, come to turn me from my father's house."

Greatly shocked at such behaviour, the youth stood motionless, not knowing how to act, when Mr. Elwood offered to lead him out of the chamber; but this he opposed, and turning to Mrs. Whitmore, "You mistake, madam," said he, "I am no tyrant; and all those who have been favoured

ed by my grandfather, even to the humblest menial, shall find respect from me."

He might have held his peace, for the lady had fallen into an hysterick, and heeded him not; he now therefore followed Mr. Elwood to the parlour, where that gentleman had ordered some refreshment for him; and they sat together more than an hour, when Mr. Whitmore joined them.

Augustus rose to salute him, and Mr. Whitmore, taking him by the hand, fobbed out, "Sir Augustus Marley, I wish you joy of your title; may you resemble the last who bore it." "I will endeavour, Sir," replied Augustus, "not to discredit it; and pardon me, Mr. Whitmore, for naming what I think should have been unnecessary between such near relations; but my aunt's unkind opinion of me obliges me to say, that nothing is further from my thoughts than the idea of disturbing your family in their residence here, as long as it shall be con-

sidered agreeable or convenient." "Dear Sir," returned Mr. Whitmore, "you are very obliging indeed, nor have I the least doubt of your goodness of heart; as for my poor wife, who I find you have seen, her affliction is so great (which cannot be wondered at) that I hope you will not notice any thing which she might have said during the paroxysm occasioned by your sudden appearance. "I am very willing, Sir," said Augustus, "to attribute Mrs. Whitmore's unkind behaviour to the violence of her sorrow, or any other cause, but ill-nature, which I certainly have not merited from her; and therefore I hope it will be remembered, while I remain here, that I am not an usurper, but the son of her brother, the natural heir of my grand-father."

The mention of his father, brought to the mind of Augustus circumstances, the recollection of which flushed his cheek with something like resentment; he arose and took a turn about the room; when Mr. Elwood
having

having observed the change in his countenance, said, "Family disagreements are very unpleasant, and ought, if possible, to be avoided; I entreat therefore, my dear Mr. Whitmore, that your influence with your lady and family will be exerted to check those ill-founded jealousies; and that you, Sir Augustus, will treat them as weaknesses beneath your notice; thus in a short time they will disappear, and you will behold each other in the proper light of friends and relations." "On my part, I assure you," said Augustus, "nothing shall be omitted to conciliate the friendship of such near kindred, and to put an end at once to a disagreeable subject, I here declare, that my intention is, to return immediately to the University, there to remain till I have finished the course of studies which were struck out for me; after which I cannot say at present how I shall dispose of myself, but I think it probable that I shall travel; and as my sisters are too happy with Mrs. Aubry,

Aubry, to think of quitting her for a residence here, Mr. Whitmore will do me a favour in thinking himself at home at Marley Hall, as long as it may suit his convenience." "Sir Augustus can say no more," said Mr. Elwood. "I acknowledge it, Sir," replied Mr. Whitmore, "I shall ever acknowledge it with gratitude."

Here the subject drooped, and they took up another, which was so painful to Mr. Whitmore, that he begged leave to retire, while they consulted on the most honorable method of conveying the deceased to his family vault, in the neighbouring church.

All matters being at length agreed on, Augustus finding himself much fatigued from travelling post, retired to his repose.

On entering his chamber he went forward to that part of it where the portrait of his father, (which he delighted to contemplate)
had

had always hung ; but on lifting up the light which he carried in his hand, he was surprised to find that the picture was removed. He looked round the wall, but the object which he sought was gone.

“ Perhaps,” said he, “ it is replaced in the drawing-room.”

And Joseph just then entering, he bade him return amongst the servants and make inquiry. Joseph was not long absent, and appeared before his master with strong marks of indignation on his countenance.

“ What’s the matter ?” said Sir Augustus ; “ have you received any insult ?” “ No, Sir,” replied Joseph. “ Where is the picture ?” said Augustus. “ You had better not mind any further inquiry to-night, Sir,” returned Joseph ; “ in the morning I shall be able to discover it perhaps ; at present you are tired, and it is late.” “ No matter,” cried Augustus ;

“ I’m

“ I’m certain that you have made some unpleasant discovery about my father’s portrait, and I cannot rest till I know what it is ; therefore tell me instantly.” Joseph hesitated. “ I insist—I command you to explain this business,” said Augustus in a peremptory tone. “ Well, Sir,” replied Joseph, “ the truth is, that Mrs. Whitmore, taking a fancy to make use of this apartment some time ago, could not bear the sight of his honour’s handsome face, and had the picture removed.” “ Where ?” cried Augustus, impatiently. “ Into a store-room at the end of the gallery,” replied Joseph.

Augustus was enraged. “ My father’s portrait thrown into a store room !” cried he. “ Where is the key of the room ? get it for me.” “ Dear Sir,” cried Joseph, “ I entreat that you will not mind it to-night ; old Margery, who has the key, is gone to bed ; she is so deaf, that if I was to attempt waking her, I should alarm the whole

whole house." "Then I will break the door," exclaimed Augustus. "That too would make a great noise," said Joseph, "and while my old master's corpse is under the roof, Sir." "I thank you, Joseph," replied Augustus, deeply sighing, "for recalling me to reason, and a sense of the respect I owe to the remains of the deceased, who I hope and believe was ignorant of this matter; but my father too is dead, and I feel an insult offered to his memory, more poignantly than I would to his person, was he living."

So saying, he suffered his servant to assist him in undressing, and went to bed, determined, that the first thing he would do in the morning, should be to restore the portrait of his father to its place amongst those of his other relatives, in the drawing-room.

The rest which Augustus stood so much in need of, he did not obtain; uneasy slumbers and harassing dreams oppressed him.

He

He fancied himself following the remains of his grand-father to the place of interment, which turned out to be a chamber in the house, where hung the picture about which he was so anxious. He was gazing on it, when Mr. Whitmore and Walter appeared, and snatched it from his view; he endeavoured to follow them, but fell down, unable to proceed, when the figure of his father stood before him, beckoning him to a stair-case; he arose, and though in great terror, followed him till they came to a door, which on endeavouring to enter, was shut violently against them by Whitmore, when a voice cried out, " Treachery! treachery!" and Augustus waking, found himself half out of bed. It was some time before he could so far recollect himself as to be certain that it was merely a dream which had disturbed him. There was a candle in the room, and drawing aside the curtains, he looked about. He recollected that he had strange dreams before in that very chamber, in which the same persons were

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concerned ; and a superstitious dread came over him, which he could not conquer. " Some mischief hangs over me," said he, " of which I am thus warned." He arose and walked about the room. He thought he heard a noise, like whispering, in the gallery, outside. He hastened to the door and locked it ; then casting his eyes towards the door of a closet, a new fear assailed him, and he secured that also ; he then, with the candle in his hand, minutely examined every part of the chamber, and somewhat ashamed of his weakness, though not entirely cured of it, once more lay down ; sleep however was compleatly banished ; the most trifling noise occasioned by the wind, alarmed him, and he lay contemplating the strange vicissitudes of his past life, short as it had been ; and conjecturing what may be the events of the future, with which he could not help thinking his late dream or vision was in some manner connected. In this state he remained till the cheering light of day revived his spirits and dissipated the gloomy fancies of his

his

his brain, when he sunk into a profound sleep, which lasted till by loud and repeated rapping at his door, Joseph at length awakened him, and having obtained admission, informed him, that it was near noon, and declared that he had suffered great alarm at finding the door fastened, and not being able to obtain any answer to the many calls he had given.

Augustus hastened to join Mr. Elwood, who was waiting for him in the study. As this was the day appointed for his grandfather's funeral, he found the great hall crowded with his tenants, and others who had come out of respect or curiosity, to assist on the occasion; and in the parlour were many of the neighbouring gentlemen assembled for the same purpose.

The young Baronet felt abashed at having over slept himself at such a time; but on being consoled by some, and receiving kind inquiries about his health from others, with
whom

whom he was wholly unacquainted, his embarrassment wore off, and in about two hours he attended the remains of Sir Augustus, in all the most extravagant parade of funeral pomp, to the family vault ; where however he could not behold him deposited without shedding tears of unfeigned regret ; and feeling himself now indeed an orphan, left wholly to his own guidance, he returned to Marley Hall in deep dejection, attended by the friendly Mr. Elwood.

CHAP.



CHAP. V.



AUGUSTUS sat absorbed in thought, while his friend Elwood and Mr. Whitmore kept up something like a conversation, which was interrupted by the entrance of Walter, who, profoundly bowing, "Please your honor," said he, "I hope its no offence, and that you'll not take it ill of me, to mention a little matter, that is just come into my mind, which perhaps none of you know any thing of." "What is it?" said Augustus. "It is about a will of his late honor's," replied Walter. "A will," repeated Mr. Elwood, "do you know any thing of Sir Augustus having

having made a will?" "I do, Sir," replied Walter, bowing. "Pray at what time?" said Augustus. "Indeed, your honor," replied the domestic, after some consideration, "I can't exactly tell how many years ago it is, but I know it is a long time." "Indeed," cried Augustus, "cannot you give a near guess at the period?" Walter then turning to Mr. Whitmore, said, "Please your honor I believe it was about a year after I came to live with Sir Augustus, that he was taken very ill one day, while you and Madam were visiting at my Lord Moreland's, and he ordered me to write to you about it very cautiously, for fear of alarming Mrs. Whitmore who was with child, and to desire you would come home as soon as possible, which you did."

"Indeed, Walter," said Mr. Whitmore, "though it was I who recommended you to my father-in-law, I don't recollect how long ago it is, as it was a matter of so little consequence; but I perfectly well remember the

illness of Sir Augustus, which greatly alarmed me—but what of all this?” . “Why, Sir,” returned Walter “that was the very time his late honor made the will; for growing very bad, he desired me to sit in his room all night, and he was very uneasy, and often asked me if it was near day, and when I at last opened the window shutters, and he saw the light, “Is not that morning?” said he. so I told him it was—then, said he, Walter, I believe it is the last morning I shall ever see, and I wish greatly that my affairs were settled. I hope, Sir, said I, that you are in no danger, and that you will live many years yet, but had I not better send for a doctor? You may do so if you will, said he, but I am more anxious about other matters, and I wish you’d write to my son, Whitmore, to desire him to come to me, but don’t say I am very bad for fear it may alarm Alicia, which, in her present situation, would be dangerous. Well, I did as he desired—I sent the groom to your honor with a letter, and
poor

poor Joseph Seymour, (as faithful a servant as ever lived) went for the Doctor."

"Pray come to the point at once, friend," said Augustus, "it is of no consequence who went for the Doctor." Walter bowing thus proceeded.

"His honor grew worse and worse, and when the Doctor came, it was easy to see that he had little hopes, which frightened me greatly, so to make my story short, after the Doctor went away, his honor called me to the bed-side, Walter, said he, I am very poorly indeed, and for fear of the worst, send off immediately for an attorney, that I may make my will, it can do no harm, you know, in case I recover, and it is well to be prepared in case of my death. I knew it was my duty to obey my Master, so I dispatched Peter for a gentleman who lived in the next town, but he being ill with the gout, and not able to come himself, directed Peter to another gentleman, a friend of his, who came

immediately, and after spending some time alone with Sir Augustus, the bell being rung I went up, and the Attorney asked me if I could read and write—I said I could after a manner. Then, said he, go and find somebody else who can, and bring him hither, that you may both witness your master's will. I called Joseph, but he could not write, nor could Peter, so there was a brother of my own, a young lad, who came about a week before to see me, and I asked the Attorney if he would do. If he is old enough to take an oath, said the Attorney. I told him that the lad was about sixteen, and he bade me bring him up, so I did, and Charles and I signed our names to the will, after we saw Sir Augustus sign his."

During this detail of Walter's, the three gentlemen appeared to each other much agitated, but Mr. Whitmore was really the most so, and when the servant had done speaking, he said, with a tremulous voice, "I am surprised that on my return Sir Augustus did
not

not mention this matter to me, but he was then recovering, and perhaps he thought it unnecessary." "And did he never tell you of it, Sir?" said Augustus. "Never, on my honor," replied Mr. Whitmore. "That's rather extraordinary," said Mr. Elwood, "but perhaps, on his recovery, he destroyed the will, which, from a conversation I once held with him, I believe to be the case." "If we knew where the will was at first deposited," said Augustus, "we would look for it." "It was laid upon a shelf in the large press, which stands in his honor's bed chamber," replied Walter, "the Attorney locked the press, and gave the key to my master, but I am certain it did not remain there long. for it was a place that I had constant recourse to, and as soon as Sir Augustus was able to quit his room, he left the key in the door of the press as usual."

"Then," said Mr. Whitmore, "if the will is in being I think it will be found in the escrutoire, which stands in the study, as I

know it is in that my father-in-law kept all his valuable papers, and I desire, Sir Augustus, that it may be forthwith inquired for, as I am certain it must be of consequence to me or my children." "Certainly," said Mr. Elwood, "there could be no other cause for his making a will, but to leave some personal property to his daughter, or her children, since the estate which is entailed on the male heir, is taxed for younger children; and at the time this will is said to have been made, Sir Augustus being at variance with his son probably wished to leave all that was in his power away from him and his heirs." "That is my conjecture, Sir," replied Mr. Whitmore, "and I therefore desire this deed may be sought for." "It may be sought for," said Mr. Elwood, "but, if found, I recommend that it shall not be opened till there are proper people present to witness its contents—I am not much skilled in the law, but I think the man who drew it, and both of those who signed it, ought to be present." "My dear Sir for what purpose?" replied Mr.

Mr. Whitmore, "unless it is disputed, which I hope will not be the case; but, if it should, 'tis in a court of justice its validity must be proved."

Augustus rose up, and ordering his own servant, and some other of the family to be called, said he would then open the *escrutoire* and search for the will—the three gentlemen therefore, attended by Walter, Joseph, and Peter, proceeded to the study, and Mr. Elwood taking his seal off the *escrutoire*, made diligent search after the will, which he almost despaired of finding, when recollecting that such pieces of furniture are generally supplied with secret drawers, he applied himself to discover them, in which having succeeded, the important paper appeared, carefully sealed with the arms of Sir Augustus Marley. Mr. Elwood then making the servants remark it, said, it was his particular request, that it should not be opened till the next day; and, putting it back in the same drawer where it was found, locked and sealed up the

escrutoire, as it had before been, and put the key into his pocket.

“At what time to-morrow,” said Mr. Whitmore, will you consent to make known the contents of this paper?” “At any hour you please,” replied Mr. Elwood, “but I would be glad, if possible, to find the person who drew it, as, if any difficulty should occur, he may be able to set us right without farther trouble, every matter having been made plain to him by the testator.” “Very true,” replied Mr. Whitmore, “pray do you, Walter, recollect his name and place of abode?” “I do very well, Sir,” returned Walter, “his name is Harrington, and he lives at a village about ten miles off, I have often seen the gentleman since that time, and he always salutes me; you, Peter, know his house.” “I warrant you,” replied Peter. “Do you then, Peter,” said Augustus, “rise early in the morning, and go to Mr. Harrington with my compliments, and that I request his presence here, with all convenient speed.”

speed." "I shall, Sir," said Peter, "and if he comes off as fast as he did once before, we shall be here long before your honor thinks of stirring." The servants now retired, and Mr. Elwood shortly after took his leave, after appointing twelve o'clock the next day for the examination of the will.

The mind of Augustus was filled with apprehensions of various natures; he saw, or thought he saw, that Whitmore had more knowledge of the will than he pretended to; indeed it seemed almost impossible that Walter would have concealed so remarkable a transaction as that he had now come forward to relate, for a number of years from Mr. Whitmore, his friend and patron, by whom he had been brought from a distant part of the country to his present place of residence

Augustus now recollected the conversation which he had overheard between this man and Peter, in the avenue of Marley Hall, at his first coming to live with his grandfather; a

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conversation,

conversation which left no room to doubt that they were secret agents of Mr. Whitmore's. That they had informed him of the existence of the will, if it had been made in the manner described, was a clear case, but why old Joseph, who was called on for a witness, had not mentioned it to his grandson, was very strange indeed. If the old man had been made acquainted with the circumstance, he most certainly would have spoken of it, and Augustus would long before now have heard of it. He therefore concluded, that it had been concealed from Joseph, or not made at the time specified—the probability that it was a business of very late date now struck him forcibly—it might have been done since he left the Hall—his grandfather had been cajoled into it—and he died suddenly—a horrid idea occurred—the young man shuddered and turned from the subject.

Mr. Elwood came early to the Hall, and had a long conversation with his young friend, in which he scrupled not to hint his doubts

doubts of the will being genuine, in this opinion Augustus concurred, giving his reasons which Mr. Elwood thought forcible, particularly when he added, that having ordered Joseph to inquire of old Margery if she had any recollection of such a matter, she declared, that she had not, though she well remembered her master's illness, and said, that "he was just getting better when poor dear Mr. Hopton came hither with young master, who was then but a pretty babe, as my brother Joseph told me, who took care of him at the gate, while Squire Hopton came in, to try if he could get a footing for him, but a certain person took care that he should not, as Joseph often said."

Margery's information had great weight with the gentlemen, it was simple and circumstantial, and they firmly believed that had Walter's story been truth, she would have been acquainted with it, since it was by no means held up as a secret from the family.

Mr. Harrington the Attorney being arrived, Augustus received him politely, and having named the business on which he had desired his presence, asked if he recollected to have been employed in it by the deceased. "O perfectly, my dear Sir," he replied. "It is a long time ago," said Mr. Elwood. "Let me see, cried the Attorney, "it was soon after I was married—that was—let me see—'pon my honor it is some fifteen or sixteen years. Bless my heart, and the old gentleman is only just now dead?" "Only a few days, Sir," replied Mr. Elwood. "And executed no other testament?" "Not that we know of," said Augustus.

The whole family being assembled, (not excepting Mrs. Whitmore) in the study, the will was once more produced, and given into the hands of Mr. Harrington, who declared it to be the same he had written, and breaking the seal, proceeded to unfold the contents. But who can conceive the astonishment of the young Baronet and his friend,
Mr.

Mr. Elwood, and indeed of the greater part of those present, when, after giving to three or four old servants (all of whom except Margery were dead) the sum of twenty pounds sterling, Mr. Harrington read with an audible voice, "I give and bequeath to my beloved daughter, Alicia Whitmore, otherwise Marley, my estate of Marley Hall, with all the issues and profits thereout arising; and I also leave and bequeath to my said daughter Alicia, &c. &c. all the jewels, plate, linen, and furniture of which I shall be possessed at the time of my decease, to be for her sole use during her natural life, and at her decease I will and bequeath the said estate of Marley Hall, to the eldest of her children then living, whether male or female, to be held and enjoyed for ever, provided the said male or female, and his or her heirs shall thenceforward bear the name and arms of Marley; in default whereof, I will and bequeath the said estate of Marley Hall, &c. to the Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Land Forces then for the time being, and to the

the Bishop of the Diocese in which the said estate lies, to be by them appropriated to the use and subsistence of all those soldiers who shall be wounded or maimed in the service of His said Majesty, his heirs, and successors. I nominate and appoint my son-in-law, the Hon. Charles Whitmore, to be joint executor with his wife, my said daughter Alicia, to this my last will and testament, in consideration of which and the great love and duty he has ever manifested towards me, I leave and bequeath to the said Hon. Charles Whitmore, all the cash which shall remain in his hands after paying the above mentioned legacies, the expences of my funeral, and all other my lawful debts, &c."

Mr. Harrington having concluded, made a low bow to his astonished audience, and hoped that the contents of the will was satisfactory to all present. "No, Sir," cried Augustus, "it is in every item illegal; the estate is entailed on the male heir of Sir Augustus Marley, and I, as the representative

ative of my father, am that heir." "What, Sir, are you not the son of this lady?" said the Attorney, pointing to Mrs. Whitmore, who sat in mute astonishment. "No," replied the youth, "I am the son of her only brother, Henry Marley." "So, so," returned Harrington, "here's likely to be a law suit?" "Certainly," said Augustus; "I shall not give up my birth-right, but will instantly appeal to the laws of my country for redress, which I have no doubt of obtaining." "You are perfectly in the right, Sir," said the man of law, as he slowly folded up the will, "if you are rightly informed respecting the entail, the proceeding is very plain and simple, you have only to prove the said entail, and that no fine has been levied by the testator, to the exclusion of his son, Henry Marley, Esquire, deceased, after which you will only have to prove yourself the legitimate heir of the said Henry Marley, Esquire, deceased, and your business is done, and this will is to all intents and purposes null

null and void." "Those proofs, I trust," replied Augustus, "are easily obtained, my legitimacy, at least, cannot be called in question." "Don't be too sure of that, young man," said Mrs. Whitmore, as she haughtily stalked out of the room, followed by her daughters. "Sure of it," repeated the youth, "by heaven he lives not who dares assert the contrary." "That, Sir Augustus Marley," said Mr. Whitmore, laying a great stress upon the title, "I suppose you will properly authenticate, as well as the other necessary matters; till when I conceive, that in right of my wife I am master here." "Ungrateful wretch!" exclaimed Augustus, "enjoy the usurpation, it will not continue long before I hold you up to the world in your native colours."

"Joseph," said Mr. Elwood, "collect your master's cloaths, and follow him to my house," so saying, he took the arm of Augustus, and led him away from the mansion of his fathers. "Just heaven!" exclaimed

the

the unhappy youth, as he entered the Rectory with his worthy friend, "and have I indeed no home, and is this the end of all my brilliant prospects?" "No, my dear boy," replied the good Mr. Elwood, "depend on it you will be restored to your inheritance, you will have ample justice."

He led him into a parlour where he left him for a few moments, and then returning, entreated that he would endeavour to calm his mind, that they may be the better able to consult on the proper steps to be taken in this strange affair; "I have sent," added he, "to desire the assistance of Mr. Webber, who drew up the deed by which your sisters resigned their grandmother's bequest, he heard the declarations of Sir Augustus respecting the estate, at the time of that very foolish transaction, and is the best person we could apply to at present." "My sisters," cried Sir Augustus in an agony, "Gracious God! what will become of them, if this infamous forgery holds good?" "Fear not," replied

replied Mr. Elwood, "it cannot be, I think; or, if it should be permitted by the Almighty, that the wicked man should flourish in the spoils of the fatherless, trust me it will be but for a little season, and the virtuous orphans yet shall triumph; rely therefore on heaven and the justice of your cause, and cheer up your drooping spirits."

"The principles of true religion were deeply impressed on the heart of Augustus, he listened with complacency to the soothing expressions of his friend, and derived comfort from them. "I have directed that we shall be left to ourselves to day," said the considerate divine, "both in consideration of your harassed spirits, and that we may be undisturbed in our discussions, we shall, therefore, dine apart from the family, and in the evening be able to talk to Webber, if he comes to us, as I hope he will." Augustus declared himself highly obliged to Mr. Elwood, acknowledging that he felt himself wholly unequal to the task of entering

ing into general topics of conversation, or appearing amongst indifferent people.

The Attorney came, and the entire evening was devoted to the important question, whether Marley Hall could be willed away from Augustus; and Mr. Webber, who was extremely well skilled in his profession, was decidedly of opinion that it could not, unless by the levying of fines, of which no mention had been made, and which he undertook a journey to London to discover; he said, however, that the original title deeds should necessarily be produced, and also a certificate, or substantial witnesses, to prove the marriage of the late Henry Marley and Lucy Hopton. These matters Mr. Elwood and Augustus undertook during the absence of Mr. Webber, who promised to set off at an early hour next morning, and accordingly took his leave.

Augustus had now strong hopes of success, which enlivened his spirits, and enabled him

to

to bear up against a disappointment which he believed would be only temporary ; he wrote an account of the entire business to his friend, Lord Stanmore, and disposed himself to await the event of his proceedings with patience, he therefore both for his own sake and to avoid giving trouble, joined the family of Mr. Elwood, at breakfast next morning, who having been apprized of the transactions at Marley Hall, conducted themselves with a delicate reserve on the occasion.

Mrs. Elwood, whose character was that of a truly good woman, and was ever fond of Augustus, from his infant days, made it now a point to be more particularly attentive to him than usual ; and her three sons, well grown, good natured boys, with their little pitted sister, a child of seven years old, were ready to fly about the house to oblige him ; but the most soothing attention of all was that paid him by a beautiful young girl, the niece of Mrs. Elwood, who, with her

her lately widowed mother, were come to pass some time at the parsonage.

Charlotte Somerville was the only child of a gentleman of a good estate in the neighbourhood of London, who not leaving male issue, his landed property reverted to a brother, and he could only leave his daughter a fortune in cash, which, as he lived elegantly, was not so considerable as it might have been; Charlotte, however was not ambitious, and found herself quite contented in the possession of five thousand pounds: She was young, beautiful, accomplished, and generous almost to a fault. With such a disposition, and such a form as she possessed, it was impossible to behold her with indifference; Augustus, therefore, admired and esteemed her; and she, considering him as a person cruelly injured, soon became warmly interested in his favor, and these mutual sentiments gave being to a delicately tender friendship, which was cherished on both sides till it became a subject of alarming apprehension

prehension to the mother of Charlotte, who, doating as she did on her amiable daughter, trembled at the idea of her forming a tender connexion with a young man, (however worthy of her) that was under such unhappy circumstances. The fears of Mrs. Somerville were not without foundation, and that generous pity which the misfortunes of the young Baronet first awakened in the breast of Charlotte, was in a little time converted into love, but with her it was a passion of great dignity; could she have raised him to a throne she would have done so, for she believed him worthy of it; but, in his present situation she thought an union with her would depress him still more, since her fortune and connexions were far beneath what his rank would have entitled him to expect, if possessed of his just rights; and now that he was reduced to poverty, it would be an insult to his honor to suppose that he would accept of what she could bestow on him, and content himself with the life of obscurity into which such a connexion would necessarily throw

throw him; she believed he had too much spirit to adopt such a plan, and she loved him the more for it, she had therefore no idea of the possibility of ever being united to him, though her heart acknowledged that could she make a choice, he was the man she would spend her life with. The thoughts of Augustus respecting her were very similar: If in possession of his fortune, he would offer it to her acceptance, and he saw enough to believe that she would not reject him; but, circumstanced as he was, it would be unjust and dishonorable to give her the least hint of his wishes, though he felt that to be obliged to relinquish all hopes of an union with her would be the most poignant part of his disappointment, should his applications to the law for redress prove ineffectual; but he still flattered himself with the hope of success, and even determined that the first use he would make of his recovered fortune, should be to lay it at the feet of Charlotte Somerville.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

TO prove the marriage of his parents was a matter in which Augustus did not expect any difficulty, he knew the church where the ceremony had been performed, and concluded that he would there find a record of the transaction; but how to obtain the title deeds of the Marley estate, which he supposed were in the possession of his antagonist, was a point which gave him great concern, he had some idea, however, that Whitmore could be compelled to produce them, and therefore deferring all inquiry respecting them till the return of his agent

Mr

Mr. Webber, he sat about making the other, relative to the marriage.

Accordingly he went, accompanied by Mr. Elwood, to the church; the register was laid before him, but no trace appeared of that for which he sought. Augustus was filled with consternation. Mr. Elwood interrogated the clerk, who was an elderly man, but he had not enjoyed his present situation above eight years. Mr. Elwood then proposed applying to the curate with whom he was acquainted, and who was now Rector of another Parish, at the distance of thirty miles from his former cure; to this gentleman they accordingly went, who recollected the transaction, and informed them, that a young gentleman in holy orders, named Ogilvie, came to his house about three and twenty years before, and requested his permission to marry a couple in his church, that he had granted permission without hesitation, and was greatly concerned when he heard next day, that it was Mr. Marley and Miss

Hopton who were married, contrary to the express commands of Sir Augustus; who was so enraged at his son's disobedience, that it was generally believed he would disinherit him: He added, that not having performed the marriage, he of course did not record it, neither did he know if any other person had, but advised them to have recourse to the book, which, when informed they already had, he shook his head, and said, that he never yet knew of a clandestine marriage turning out well, for that even though the contracting parties may escape the evil consequences that generally followed, some other person would be involved in them, of which the present case was a full demonstration. He then said, that it was probable a certificate may be in existence, for that it was scarcely possible the clergyman could be so remiss as not to have given one.

“If there was such a thing,” said Augustus, deeply sighing, “I have but little chance of ever finding it, since it is most likely my father

ther had it with him when he was lost." "Perhaps not," said Mr. Elwood, "I think it is most probable that he left it with your uncle Hopton, you had therefore better apply to his executors, and request that his papers may be examined."

This being immediately determined on, Augustus and his friend took leave of the clergyman and returned home, when it was to be considered how they should next proceed. The widow of Mr. Hopton had been some time married, and her children placed at public schools, where Augustus had occasionally visited them, but had dropped all acquaintance with her; he was at a loss, therefore, how to apply, but at length resolved on writing to her, which he accordingly did, and received an immediate answer; in which the lady declared her surprise that Mr. Augustus should recollect her, since during the period of her widowhood she never had the honor of *even once* seeing him; that as to the papers of her late husband, she had never

meddled with them, but left the management of every thing to her brother, Mr. Norton, who lived in London. As she was good enough to name the street where her brother lived, Augustus wrote to his agent, desiring him to call on Mr. Norton, for any papers which might have been in the possession of Mr. Hopton, belonging to the late Henry Marley.

The prospects of Augustus were now more gloomy than ever; he was disappointed in what he considered to be a matter easily accomplished, and when he reflected on the innumerable difficulties that were likely to arise in his researches for the deed, which, after all, if he should obtain it, would avail him nothing, unless he could prove his legitimacy—his heart revolted from the task and sunk into despondence.

From these fits of melancholy which became frequent, he was generally roused by the animating voice of Charlotte Somerville.

“Why,”

"Why," she would say, "do you thus yield to sorrow, because you have met some obstruction in your pursuit of justice; surely this is no uncommon circumstance, tis what we see happen every day; let it not discourage you then, my friend, for what is it, however difficult, that a resolute perseverance will not surmount?" "Ah! my sweet Charlotte," he would reply, "you see not my perplexities in their full extent; I have nothing but a simple truth to oppose against my adversaries, who are armed with all the advantages that fraud, aided by the powerful influence of wealth can procure; they have written as well as personal evidences to produce in their favor, which, however false, I am unable to disprove, what chance then have I of success?"

On those occasions she was often on the point of declaring that her fortune should be at his disposal, but much as she wished to aid him in this particular, delicacy still interfered and prevented the generous intention,

which she could not form into words adequate to her own feelings, and those with which she wished to impress him, in order to make the offer acceptable. She thought of writing, as a less embarrassing method of communicating her desire of serving him, but while she deliberated on the propriety of this step, she was happily relieved from all anxiety by the arrival of a letter from Lord Stanmore, which in the fulness of his gratitude for the friendly contents, Augustus put into her hand. His Lordship, after condoling with him, and then encouraging hopes of redress, concluded thus, "*my house, my fortune, and my heart, are open to you; come then, dear Marley, and by using them, as your necessities may require, fully evince your friendship for your faithful*

Stanmore."

"You mean to accept this invitation I hope?" said Charlotte. "Alas!" replied Augustus, "how can I consent to be burthensome to such a friend?" "Rather," cried Charlotte, "say, how can you, by a denial,

denial, consent to wound the feelings of such a friend—I know not what *your* notions of friendship may be, but I can tell you, that were I in the place of Lord Stanmore, and that you rejected my affectionate proposal, I would never more acknowledge you.”

“You think, then, that I ought to go to him?” said Augustus. “Instantly,” she replied, “if you really love him.” “Heaven is my witness that I do,” replied the youth.

Mr. Elwood just then entering, demanded the cause of so fervent an appeal, and an explanation taking place, he declared himself of Charlotte’s opinion. “Interest and money,” said the good man, “which are two material articles in the progress of a law suit, this young nobleman possesses in abundance, and freely offers the participation of; such an invitation is a proof of his worthiness, and it will be injuring both him and yourself to reject it. Be advised, therefore, my dear Augustus, and accept without delay the powerful aid of your truly noble friend.” The

youth, convinced of the error of an overstrained delicacy, now resolved to comply with the desire of his friends, and to set off the next morning for the seat of Lord Stanmore, he accordingly sent Joseph to the next town to procure him a chaise, which he appointed to attend him at an early hour, and lest the family should be disturbed, he declared his intention of breakfasting on the road, and as they were about to separate for the night, offered his adieus.

Charlotte's emotions were visible to every one, as he approached to bid her farewell; "and when," said she falteringly, "shall we meet again?" Augustus deeply sighing, replied, "if I succeed in the recovery of my birth-right immediately — if not — never." Her tears could not be restrained, he lifted her hand to his lips, then fervently pressing it to his agitated bosom, hurried from the room: Mr. Elwood followed him to his bed-chamber, where he sat resting his head upon his hand, while Joseph packed up the
few

few necessaries he had brought from college. "My dear Marley," cried Mr. Elwood, "I cannot bear to see you thus afflicted—cheer up, dear boy, and hope for better times, I trust in heaven, that we soon shall meet under happier circumstances, when we shall look back on these little rubs of fortune as the kind preparatives ordained by Almighty Goodness, to teach us what we are, and make us properly grateful for the blessings we enjoy."

"Best of men," cried Augustus, "be my trials what they may, I beseech heaven to shower on you its choicest blessings." "And I, my child," he replied, "will daily pray for your prosperity; accept, I beseech you, from a real friend, this little supply for the expences of your journey." With these words he offered a purse, but Augustus putting it back, replied, "most freely would I accept if I had need of it; but my grandfather's supplies were so liberal and frequent, that I never was run out, but, on the con-

trary, had so much more than my occasions required, that near an hundred pounds accumulated and remains in my hands; accept however my most grateful thanks for your kind intention, and now, my worthy friend, farewell." He folded the good man in his arms, who returned the embrace, exclaiming, "the blessing of God be with you my dear Augustus." "Leave me, leave me," the youth replied, "your tenderness, and that of all under this hospitable roof, has quite unmaned me." Mr. Elwood wrung his hand and left him—Augustus threw himself across the bed, and melted into tears.

At the earliest dawn Joseph roused his master, who had not taken off his clothes for the night, and hurrying down stairs, threw himself into the chaise and drove off (as he believed) from the house of Mr. Elwood for ever. Joseph was greatly alarmed at the state of mind in which he found his master, and strove to get into conversation, but after vainly starting many subjects, he at length

succeeded, by touching the master chord which governed all his feelings.

“What a sweet good-natured young lady,” said Joseph, “is Miss Somerville.” Augustus sighed—“Would you believe it, Sir, when I was going to call you up I met her, early as it was, upon the stairs, so standing aside to let her pass, I bowed to her—Good bye, Joseph, said she, I wish you and your master a good journey.” “Amiable Charlotte!” cried Augustus. “That was not all,” continued Joseph, “but as we drove down the avenue, she was leaning over the paling that fences in the shrubbery, looking earnestly at us, and I am as sure as that I’m alive she left her bed on purpose to see us set off—it was a sort of leave taking, for I believe she thinks it long till we’ll return.” “Long indeed,” replied Augustus. “Why, how long do you think, Sir?” asked Joseph. “Most probably never,” said his master. “Good God! Sir,” exclaimed Joseph, “not to re-

turn to Marley Hall, to dear good Mr. Elwood!" "Marley Hall is no longer mine," replied Augustus, "it is very doubtful if I shall be able to recover it, nay, I am almost certain that I must give it up." "How give it up?" cried Joseph. "Give it up to Whitmore, and that damned villain Walter, who I know is at the bottom of all this mischief; I tell you what, Sir, I will set fire to the house sooner than they shall live in it. As for Mr. Peter, I was near giving him a good drubbing yesterday, when I was going for the chaise; he thought to ask impertinent questions, but I bid him keep his distance, for though he was dressed all in new mourning, I did not think him my equal yet, for I well remember the pickle he was in when he first came to Marley Hall." "Do you remember Peter's coming to Marley Hall?" said Augustus. "Aye, that I do," replied Joseph. "How long ago is it?" asked his master. "About ten years I believe," answered Joseph. "You must mistake," said Augustus, "for it is sixteen years since my grand-

grandfather made his will, and Peter was then at the Hall, and called upon to witness it, but could not write his name." "Not write his name?" cried Joseph, "and at Marley Hall sixteen years ago, who says all this?" "Walter," replied Augustus. "Then Walter is a liar," exclaimed Joseph, clenching his fist, "and I'll prove it upon oath." "If you can do that," replied Augustus, "it may be of some use." "Do it," cried Joseph, "bring me to the test, and if I don't prove that Peter can both read and write, and was not at Marley Hall sixteen years ago, but came there after my grandfather's death, when there was a move amongst the servants, and some of the old ones were promoted to higher situations, which was the method Sir Augustus took of rewarding those whose long and faithful services he approved of, and Mr. Whitmore, who took every opportunity of bringing in some favorite of his own, then recommended Peter—if I don't prove this, call me a cheat, and never trust me more. "What you say, indeed,"

indeed," returned Augustus, "bears strong appearances of truth, and perhaps you may be able to disprove some other leading circumstances: Do you recollect whether your grandfather could read or write?" "He could, Sir," replied Joseph, "and, more than that, it was he taught me." "Oh! gracious heaven, exclaimed Augustus, "all that has been said is false! — a villanous fabrication, planned for my ruin."

He then repeated to his servant all that he could recollect of Walter's story about the will, and Joseph exclaimed, "Oh! why did I not know of this before we left the Hall, I would have contradicted them to their faces, old Margery could have done the same, and they would not have dared to carry matters with so high a hand, for as sure as God is in heaven the will and all is a wicked forgery." "It certainly is," replied Augustus, "and yet I fear it will be impossible for me to prove it so." "Never fear, Sir," said Joseph, "God Almighty never yet forsook the innocent,

innocent, and you'll find that something or other will turn out in your favor, if it was nothing else but their quarrelling amongst themselves, which is likely enough; for it is impossible that villains can be sincere to each other, and I believe a more compleat set of them never lived than those we have left at Marley Hall."

Augustus arrived in safety at the paternal seat of Lord Stanmore, where he was received by that nobleman and his mother, as the brother and the son they had at first acknowledged at Marley Hall; both kindly strove to cheer his spirits, and besought him to rest on their friendship for every necessary aid towards the recovery of his rights, in which should he fail, both he and his sisters would find an asylum with them, and ever be considered as the nearest and dearest relatives.

After spending a week at Stanmore Park, and consulting with his friends, Augustus thought it expedient to go to London, for the

the purpose of personally consulting some eminent lawyer, and Lord Stanmore, whose anxiety on the occasion nearly equalled his own, resolved to accompany him, they accordingly set out, and were met on their arrival at Lord Stanmore's house by Mr. Webber, who was apprised, by a letter, of the intended journey of his client; he informed Augustus, that his grandfather had never levied any fine, and that he was so far secure; but added, that unless he could prove the marriage of his parents, though the deed specifying the entail of the estate on the heirs male lawfully born was in his possession, it would avail him nothing; he also mentioned his having waited on Mr. Norton, who promised to look over the papers of his late brother-in-law, and that having, by appointment called again, Mr. Norton delivered to him some letters, which he declared were the only papers in his possession in which the name of Marley was to be seen, and which, on the present occasion, were of no use whatever.

“What

“What shall I do?” cried Augustus despairingly. “Perhaps,” said Mr. Webber, “we may be able to find the clergyman who performed the ceremony, or some person who was present at it; are there none of your mother’s family living who could inform us?” “I don’t know of any,” replied Augustus, “but one sister, who lives in Ireland.” “Write to her immediately,” said Mr. Webber. “And in the mean time,” said Lord Stanmore, “would it not be well to lay the affair before counsel.” “Certainly, my Lord,” replied Webber, “it is the first step Sir Augustus has a right to take, for, in my opinion it would be very hazardous to take any other at present, and the height of madness to think of entering the courts till he has some more substantial grounds to found his claim on than what appear in the present state of affairs.” “You think, then,” said Augustus, “that there is little chance of success.” “Indeed I do, Sir,” replied Mr. Webber, “unless proofs appear in your fa-
vor,

vor, which we have not yet been able to obtain; by all means, however, I advise you to have immediate recourse to counsel, for the case is of such consequence, that nothing within the reach of possibility should be omitted."

This was a point already decided on, and a lawyer of great eminence was immediately consulted, who was so much of Mr. Webber's opinion, that he forbid all proceedings for the present, and directed what steps should be taken to obtain the necessary proofs, which were immediately put in practice. Mr. Webber returned home fully instructed, and Augustus having written to his aunt Belinda Hopton, (now Lady Saunders) accompanied his friend back to Stanmore Park, there to remain till all things should be in readiness for the commencement of hostilities with the usurper of his rights.

The image of Charlotte Somerville haunted the imagination of Augustus, he strove, but
strove

strove in vain, to forget her; nor could he
 restrain his fancy from soaring into romantic
 flights, and pourtraying scenes of exquisite
 happiness, in which she appeared mistress of
 Marley Hall. Roused from these waking
 dreams, his sorrows became more acute, and
 his spirits so low that he was ready to yield
 himself up to despair, but the kindness of his
 friend supported him, and his hopes were
 once more revived by the answer he received
 from his aunt, Lady Saunders, who informed
 him, that she herself was present at the mar-
 riage of his parents; the other witnesses, how-
 ever, whom she had named, were all of them
 dead, but the clergyman, with whom she
 had since become acquainted, was living,
 and married to a relation of her hus-
 band; she added, that Sir Robert's state
 of health rendered it necessary for him to
 try the effects of a milder climate than
 that of Ireland, and she was preparing to
 accompany him to the South of France, but
 as they meant to pass through England, she
 would there make any deposition that should
 be

be considered necessary, concerning the marriage of her sister; she directed him to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Ogilvie, and concluded with most affectionate wishes for his success and future happiness.

Augustus immediately dispatched this letter to his lawyer, from whom he had the pleasure of hearing, in return, that one of his difficulties was done away, as the evidence of her Ladyship and the clergyman would be sufficient to establish his legitimacy; and it now only remained to prove the clause of entail, in the original deed of the Marley estate, which it was hoped would be accomplished from the steps that were taking for that purpose.

Mr. Webber, a man of prudence and ability, filed a bill in chancery against Mr. and Mrs. Whitmore, requiring them to produce the deed of the Marley estate, but this was not in their power to do, as it had been some time destroyed, they accordingly answered

fwered the bill, and proved that no such deed
 was in their possession, nor did they know of
 its existence, and otherwise defied Augustus
 to prove the entail, but this he could not do,
 the consequence of which was that after some
 fruitless attempts, which were chiefly made
 to gratify the active friendship of Lord Stan-
 more, and which were productive of nothing
 but expence to that amiable young nobleman,
 and disappointments to Augustus, he gave
 up all hope of ever recovering his fortune,
 and resigning himself to his fate, determined
 on entering the army as a volunteer, and
 procuring by his sword such a livelihood as
 should be no disgrace to the name he bore;
 or by falling in the attempt, obtain an honor-
 able death.

This plan was no sooner discovered by
 Lord Stanmore than he altered it very ma-
 terially, by applying for a commission for his
 friend, which he readily obtained, and Au-
 gustus prepared to embark, with some addi-
 tional troops, that were ordered to join the
 allied

allied army, then assembled at Soignies, under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, who was about to commence his first campaign as Commander in Chief. Augustus, finding that he had time enough for the undertaking, resolved to visit his sisters, and having obtained a short leave of absence, set out for Scotland, attended by Joseph.

The young ladies had undergone much anxiety since the commencement of their brother's misfortunes, and he found them, on his arrival at Mrs. Awbry's, overwhelmed with dejection; roused, however, by his appearance, and the cause of it, their sorrow found a new and keener source, and when they reflected on the dangers he was going to encounter, and the probability of seeing him no more, all else appeared as trivial, and this the destructive, the final blow, which deprived them of all they valued upon earth. He remained with them but three days, during which Mrs. Awbry gave him the kindest

kindest assurances of her maternal care and tenderness of his sisters, and besought him to be under no apprehension for their safety during her life, which she hoped would be lengthened for their sake, and the happiness of once more beholding her beloved Charles for whom Augustus being charged with letters, and having taken a melancholy leave of his sisters, he departed, and journeyed with speed to England. The troops were beginning to embark, and he had only time to write to Mr. Elwood, and spend one night with Lord and Lady Stanmore (who assured him they meant to visit Scotland in the ensuing summer, for the sole purpose of seeing his sisters) when he was obliged to join his regiment at Portsmouth.

In the hurry and agitation of his thoughts, Augustus never recollected the necessity of dismissing his servant, till he found him busied in putting his baggage on board the transport, in which he was to sail, when sighing deeply, he approached him, and reaching

reaching out his hand, "Now, my good Joseph," said he, "we must part, would to heaven I could reward your faithful services, but, return to Lord Stanmore, and he will receive you kindly, for my sake, and the knowledge he has of your worth; perhaps, too we may meet again when I may have it in my power to prove my friendship for you—Farewell."

Joseph turned away his face to conceal his tears, (which he considered unmanly) as well as to recover his voice, in which having succeeded, he thus replied. "Do not think, Sir, that any change of fortune can weaken my regard for you, or induce me to quit you, at the time perhaps when I may be most necessary to you; I never had such a thought, and am determined to follow you through the whole world." "Alas! Joseph," returned Augustus, "if I wished to accept of your kind offer I could not, it is not in my power to take you with me, remain therefore in your native country and be happy."

"Happy!"

"Happy!" repeated Joseph, "and the master that I love exposed to all the dangers of battle? — Ah! no! — and if you will not or cannot take me with you, I am resolved however not to be left behind, I am as well able as most people to carry a musket, for, thank God, I am strong and healthy; and, though I am but a poor fellow, I have a loyal heart, and am as willing to fight in defence of my king and country, as any person, I will therefore enter the service immediately, if the Colonel of your regiment will receive me."

Augustus was greatly affected at this proof of attachment in his servant, whom he endeavoured to dissuade from his purpose by representing to him how happy he might be by remaining in the service of Lord Stanmore, but all his arguments proved fruitless, and he was compelled to acquiesce in the decision of Joseph, who immediately repaired to the Colonel, a very amiable young gentleman, who, on receiving from Augustus an

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explanation of the motives which induced Joseph to turn soldier, expressed the utmost approbation of him, and promised to be his friend.

The troops being all embarked, and a prosperous gale springing up, they were soon wafted to the destined shore and reached Soignies in good health and spirits about the middle of the month of March, in the year 1745. Augustus had been with the army but a short time, when accounts were received of the enemy having invested Tournay, under the direction of Count Saxe, and in presence of the King and Dauphin of France, who came to share the glory of the conquest, not in the least doubting of success. The Duke of Cumberland on receiving this intelligence, immediately proposed marching with his whole force to the relief of that garrison, and though the allied army was greatly inferior in number to that of France, the Austrian and Dutch Generals, readily concurred in the measure, and they accordingly
advanced

advanced and posted themselves in sight of the enemy, who were encamped near the village of Fontenoy.

The allies being properly disposed for the occasion, began the attack at day break, and the British infantry soon drove the French from their lines, but being badly supported by the cavalry, this was of small advantage, and the battle continued with doubtful success till the afternoon when the left wing failing in the support expected from it, obliged the Duke of Cumberland to take measures for a retreat, which he effected in good order, having obtained as much honor and lost fewer lives than the victors. Augustus, who with his countrymen was exposed to the hottest fire of the enemy, was wounded, yet not so badly but with the assistance of his faithful Joseph, he was able to reach Lessines, where the army encamped. Joseph, who but an inexperienced soldier, behaved so well, in exciting those who were nearest him to rally, by the boldness with

which he faced about, that his Colonel thanked him, and would undoubtedly have conferred on him some more substantial mark of his approbation, but in that very charge which drove the enemy back to their camp with great slaughter, that gallant officer was killed. The wound of Augustus, though not mortal, proved tedious in the cure, and might have at length been fatal, but for the unremitting care of his servant.



CHAP.

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CHAP. VII.

WHILE Augustus was languishing under pain and disease in a foreign land; his sufferings were rendered bearable by the tender attentions of Charles Cambell, who, on the recommendation of Mrs. Awbry, had become his most intimate friend, and administered to his mental as well as his bodily afflictions, by cheering conversation and friendly solicitude. The dear wife and sisters they had left in England were the constant subjects of their thoughts and discourse, and they consoled themselves in this necessary absence from them by reflecting that they were enjoying

joying the comforts of life, and the protection of their relations.

But how different was the reality from what they had fondly pictured. When the time drew near that was appointed for the marriage of Maria with Mr. Murray, the unhappy girl shrunk from the approaching trial, and it was not till the morning of the intended nuptial day, when she could defer it no longer, that she acquired courage to avow her situation; the rage of her mother was beyond all bounds, she raved and spurned the prostrate suppliant with her foot, who knelt to implore forgiveness, and had not the friends who were assembled to celebrate the wedding interposed, her violence might have carried her to criminal lengths. The disappointment of Mr. Murray was extreme, and he fled from the house with precipitation, while Mrs. Aubry, who came prepared for the storm, took the weeping Maria under her protection, till time and the interference of friends should effect a reconciliation.

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But this proved a more difficult task than the good lady suspected, and the vindictive mother held out against all solicitation, only yielding to the ardent suit of the heart wounded Murray, who after much argument prevailed on her to bestow a small annuity for life on Maria, out of the interest of an ample fortune, which, by her father's will, she could not inherit unless she married with the consent of her mother; this point gained, she gave up all farther hopes, and agreed to remain with Mrs. Aubry till her husband should return from the war.

The friendship of Maria and the Marleys increased with their knowledge of each other, and under the maternal eye of Mrs. Aubry the little society began to exhibit an appearance of tranquillity, which could not long be banished from the mansion of resignation and virtue, when they were suddenly involved in new distresses by the unexpected death of their amiable protectress, who, after an illness of a very few days, expired. She was per-

fectly in her reason, and sensible of her approaching dissolution, which, she averred, would have given her more pleasure than regret but for the situation in which she was leaving her young friends; she gave them a great deal of good advice, and divided amongst them a small sum of money, all which she could call her own, and from her extensive charities was able to save, for the voice of distress had never called to her in vain; desiring a little casket to be reached to her, she took from it a case of wrought silk, and suspending it from her neck by a ribbon, placed it upon her bosom.

“This, my dear children,” said she, “is to be buried with me; let it not be examined it is only a letter and a lock of hair—in my beaureau you will find a large packet, containing the history of my sad life, read and profit by it you who are unmarried, and, when you have all perused it, let it be kept safe and delivered into the hands of my dear Charles, who has so often wished to learn the
cause

cause of my emotion when certain names were mentioned; if he returns not, which heaven avert, give it to Archibald and bid him keep it for my sake, who ever loved him, and bequeath this to his care, for the benefit of all the females of his family. Charles will weep for me, but you, Maria, must comfort him; may heaven bless him and all of you, my dear children. One charge I would yet leave with you who are likely to become mothers; should ever any of you have daughters, let it be your first care to teach them, by kindness, to confide in you as their dearest friend, for so might many innocent creatures be saved from misery, who, fearful of acknowledging those impressions which delicate minds receive most deeply, either by a total concealment, or bad advice, fall into error and misfortune; this was not altogether my case, but, my poor Maria, it was your's."

The good old lady took a solemn leave of all her domestics, and without the least

visible pain, resigned her blameless soul into his hands who bestowed it.

Mrs. Aubry's steward (at her own desire) immediately acquainted her heir with the event, who hastened, with three wild young men, his sons, to the castle, and arrived there on the fourth day after the decease of its amiable mistress. The free behaviour of these young men was extremely disagreeable to the ladies, who having secured the packet, and seen her remains born away for interment, prepared to depart, and proceeded to Inverness next morning; here they held a council, when it was agreed, that the Marleys should return to England, and Maria should seek the protection of her brother-in-law, Archibald Campbell. Accordingly they commenced their journey, resolved to travel as far as possible together; at length they parted with sincere regret on both sides, and Maria took the road to Edinburgh.

"And what," said Alicia, as the chaise drove off with her and Lucy towards England, - "what is now to become of us?" "We must, my dear Alicia," replied Lucy, "conform to our fortune, and endeavour to obtain support by our own exertions, we have some talents, and our education has been of the useful kind, I therefore hope we shall not be exposed to great distress, since, thank heaven, we have none of that false pride which teaches, that it is degrading to a gentlewoman to work; we are both well calculated to assist the mistress of a boarding school, or to undertake the tuition of a young girl in her parents house, by which we may obtain a respectable asylum."

Alicia burst into tears. "Ah! my dear sister," cried Lucy, clasping her in her arms, "combat this weakness, I beseech you, else how shall you be able to perform the task which heaven has allotted to you, and is not this what we had a right to expect since our inheritance was taken from us?" "It is," replied

replied Alicia, "and yet, my sister, it is terrible:— Oh! that we had been permitted to retain my dear grandmother's bequest, how happy might we now retire together, far from the bustle of that deceitful world into which our misfortunes, are conducting us inexperienced and unprotected, to encounter all its dangers—Ah! Lucy, can you think of this and not shudder at the dreadful prospect?"

"I am not," replied Lucy, "fond of conjuring up images of horror; our situation viewed in its true light, is bad enough, but I can behold it without shrinking, and am resolved to make the best of it, which is surely better than to seek for imaginary ills, the contemplation of which would weaken my mind, and increase the difficulty of combating those real ones that lie in my path; let us then rather trust in the protection of the Almighty, and hope for better days." Alicia felt the truth of her sister's reasoning, and endeavoured to profit by the example of fortitude she set before her, a fortitude, which
con-

considering the very perilous situation, they were in, was truly great.

Nothing remarkable occurred during the journey, till they arrived, about six o'clock in the evening, at Durham, where having designed to take a couple of days rest, they ordered themselves to be drove to the house of their former kindly attentive friend, the Rev. Dr. Burton; the carriage stopped, and the driver having given a loud rap, the door was quickly opened by a well dressed footman, who seemed to be in waiting for the reception of company, but on seeing a dirty post boy and a hack carriage, he started back.

Alicia having let down the side glass, inquired if Doctor and Mrs. Burton were at home?" "Yes—I don't know—I'll ask—" stammered out the servant, and went back into the hall, but seeming to recollect himself, returned to the door, and inquired who he should say wanted to see his master and mistress. "The Miss Marleys," replied Alicia

Alicia. The footman disappeared, and they remained at the door upwards of ten minutes, when the driver, with a saucy grin said, "I believe we may as well pack off, eh! mistress?" to Alicia, who kept her head out of the side window, waiting the return of the servant; she made no reply, she was reflecting on the different reception she met with at that door when about a year before she drove up to it in the equipage of her grandfather, Sir Augustus Marley.

The driver having waited a few minutes longer, said, with an oath, that his poor jades would not have a foot to stand on, and mounted his seat, when the footman at length making his appearance, said his master was engaged with some gentlemen who had dined with him, and his lady saw no company that evening, but would be happy to receive the Miss Marleys visit next day.

Alicia drew in her head and leaned it despondingly against the back of the chaise, while

while the driver turning about, asked "well, I suppose we are to go to an Inn, which do you choose?" "It is quite indifferent to us," replied Lucy. "If so be, then," said the driver, "I'll go to the house I know best." He accordingly whipped his horses, and after driving through several streets stopped at the door of a large house, in the hall of which stood several soldiers, seemingly in dispute with a man, who immediately left them and was about to open the chaise door, when the driver calling out, "Avaft, there," came to the door himself, and having opened it, laid his hand upon the step, and addressing Lucy, who was next him, said, "Come mistress, you know I'm to carry you no farther, so let me have my fare." "Let down the step," replied Lucy, "till we get out, you shall be paid in the house as soon as I get change." "Ah! ha! my lass," cried he, "that won't do for you, no tricks upon travellers, I must be paid now, or here you stay," so saying, he flapped to the door.

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The words, my lass, and the threat of confinement, roused the indignation of Lucy, and in an angry tone she ordered the door to be opened. "Not till I'm paid," cried the driver. Provoked beyond all bearing, and seeing Alicia ready to sink with terror, she attempted, by putting out her hand, to open the door herself, saying, "I insist on getting out, and prevent me at your peril." But the fellow leaning his shoulder against the door, swore vehemently that she should not stir till he was paid; when one of the soldiers rushing from the hall, seized him by the collar, and with one drag made him quit his post, and giving him a shake which threatened his destruction, asked how he dared to behave in such a manner; a scuffle ensued, which increased the terror of the ladies to a great degree, when the landlord being brought out by the noise, assisted them to leave the carriage, and conducted them into the parlour, where Alicia immediately fainted, and Lucy unable to support her, was near sinking by her side, when the woman of the house
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and one of her maids came to their assistance.

After the lovely sisters were somewhat recovered, Lucy, giving the woman of the house a guinea, requested she would take the trouble of paying the driver, telling how far he had brought them, and added, "be so good as to present the change, with our thanks, to the humane foldier, to whom we are greatly obliged." "Dear sweet young lady," said the landlady, I'm sure he must be a monster that could offend you, so he must, and so I'll let him know I warrant him."

The good woman retired, but soon returning assured them that she had given the driver his own share, and ordered him never to come to her house again, so she did, for she would not have it said that gentlefolks should receive impertinence at her door from never a dirty fellow. "But as for the foldier," said she, "he would not take a farthing, so
as

as I knew you wished to make it up to him, some how or other, I offered him liquor to drink your healths, but no, not he, indeed he could not touch a drop; so here's your change. And now had I not better get your tea, and see about something nice for your supper." "You are very good," replied Lucy, "pray do for us what you think best, and as the soldier refuses to be rewarded, be so good as to send him hither, that we may return him our thanks at least." "I will ma'am," replied the hostess, "Ah! it is easy enough to know real gentility, as I says to our John."

She left them once more, and in a few moments the soldier made his appearance. Lucy looking up, on his entrance, he exclaimed, "Good God! Miss Marley," while both sisters, with equal astonishment, repeated the name of Harcourt, who stood before them in the habit of a soldier. Mutual surprise, together with the awkwardness of the rencounter, kept all parties for some minutes

nutes silent, when Harcourt at last said, "in how despicable a light must you behold me. Oh! if to feel shame and contrition be an expiation of our faults, how sincerely at this moment are all mine atoned for—dear ladies can you pardon me?" "Whoever you are," replied Alicia, "we know not that you have injured us, but we feel you have served us, for which accept our thanks." "That I have not injured you," he replied, (whatever was intended) I thank heaven, which interposed in your behalf, and it affords me a sincere pleasure to have been even in this little matter serviceable to you, and if I could but convince you that I am not in reality so great a villain as my appearance at the house of your amiable friend, Mrs. Aubry, (in company with the most infamous of men) has given room to suppose, it would be a greater satisfaction to me than I have experienced for a long time."

"You mean Sir Charles Denby," said Lucy. "Yes," replied Harcourt, "Sir Charles."

Charles Denby was the name assumed on that occasion, but he has had a variety of names and titles, in the course of his impositions; his real name, however, is Charles Manning." "You excite my curiosity extremely," said Alicia, "pray sit down, and if it will not hurt your own feelings too much, inform us on what design you and this same Sir Charles came to Mrs. Aubry's, for that we could never discover, and only know that the letter of introduction was a forgery." "And how did you find out that?" said he. "Mr. Campbell," replied Alicia, "wrote to Sir John Stanly, who, in reply declared, that he had not met with, nor had the least knowledge of any such people; which was fully confirmed by comparing his letter with that presented by your friend to Mrs. Aubry."

"My friend!" cried Harcourt, "alas! he was my greatest foe!—but I have long since renounced him, and his infamous way of life, I have put on the livery of honor,
[which

which I am determined my future conduct shall never disgrace, and I hope yet to have an opportunity of proving, that vile as the courses were which I suffered myself to be led into, they have not entirely depraved my mind, or been able to eradicate the innate principles of virtue, which often rose up, and so far checked my guilty career as to save me from the extremes of criminality; but I was so infatuated, or rather so entangled in my connexion with Manning, that it was a long time before I could extricate myself, even after I had firmly resolved on it. The story of my life is too intricate, and (I must confess) too much involved in licentiousness to be repeated to you; but in order to lead to that part of it in which you were so materially concerned, I must give you an outline of the principle occurrences."

"We?—We materially concerned?" both ladies exclaimed. "Yes, indeed," said he. "For heaven's sake explain," cried Lucy, he bowed, was about to begin his narrative, when
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the hostess entered with the tea equipage, and he rose to depart. "Do not, I beseech you," said Alicia, "leave us, after raising our curiosity to such a height, without gratifying us with an explanation." "Indeed I do not mean it," said he, "and will return in half an hour, for as I shall quit Durham early in the morning, it is probable I may never have another opportunity of conversing with you."

He modestly withdrew, and saved them from an embarrassment which both began to experience on the appearance of the tea, as they could not, with any regard to propriety, invite him to partake of it, nor could they, consistent with hospitality and that affability which both highly possessed, suffer him to sit apart, but he felt their situation, and kindly relieved them.

In something less than an hour, and when the loquacity of the woman of the house (who made it a point to attend on them herself) had compleatly fatigued the fair sisters,

Harcourt

Harcourt returned, and, being seated, he thus addressed them.

“ Ill as I have supported the character, I was born a gentleman, and being intended for one of the learned professions, my education was properly attended to, but losing my father by a sudden death, before he had time to arrange his worldly affairs, and assign me over to the care of proper guardians, I found myself, at the age of eighteen, entirely my own master, and in possession of four hundred pounds a year, beside some ready cash. This was, in my opinion, an inexhaustible fund, and far from pursuing the plan which I knew my father had sketched out for me, I launched at once into that world which has so many allurements for youth and inexperience. My ready money lasted but a short time, and my yearly income was by no means adequate to my expences, I commenced borrower, and involved myself in debts, which, in order to discharge, I was obliged to mortgage, in short, one folly led the way to another.

ther, and I was soon ruined. My little estate, the wreck of a great one, which had been squandered in my father's family before he was born, was sold to pay my debts, and nothing was left me but the furniture of my house, this I had sold on my own account, and, finding it produced a pretty sum, I thought of purchasing a commission in the army and going abroad, as something like shame assailed me whenever I met any of my gay companions, and unable to join in their pursuits of what is falsely termed pleasure. While I was wavering in my resolution respecting the army, my evil destiny led me to a gaming house; I played and had great success; I pursued what I counted my good fortune, and in less than a month had acquired several thousand pounds: With this I once more launched into extravagance, sought my former associates, proudly displayed my wealth, and joined in every wild scheme that was proposed, till I was again nearly exhausted; however I had the same resource as before, to which I accordingly applied

applied myself, and won a considerable sum; but as I had engaged to accompany a party to Bath, and wished to appear in a superior style of elegance on the occasion, I did not think my stock of cash sufficient, and certain of increasing it, resorted to the gaming table on the night before my journey was to commence; but hitherto I had played with gentlemen, now it was my lot to fall amongst sharpers, who stripped me of every shilling, and I left the room in a state of actual distraction. Next day I feigned sickness to avoid joining the party, and after disposing of some of my cloaths to procure sustenance, went at night to the gaming table, with what I could badly spare from the necessaries of life, in the hope of making up my losses, but fortune favored me not, and I lost that little which was literally my all.

Quite disconsolate I threw myself into a seat, in a remote part of the room, and began to yield to the suggestions of despair, when a plain dressed genteel looking man, who had

betted at the table where I played, approached me; "why so cast down, Sir?" said he, "you have not lost much." Not at present, I replied, but it was the last stake." "If you wish to try your luck again," said he, "I will be happy to supply you, but take my advice, and play in future with more calmness; I have observed your method, it is such as I have seldom known to succeed."

The stranger, who was Charles Manning, offered me some gold, but I declined it saying, that I was in too much agitation to play any more that night. "Well then," said he, "will you favor me with your company to a tavern, for I wish to be better acquainted with you." I agreed to this proposal, we supped together, and an intimacy commenced of the most unbounded nature—he acknowledged to me, that he belonged to a company of gamblers, who were dispersed over the kingdom, at all the genteel places of resort, and that it was one of his party who had won my money, which he returned, offering

fering me a partnership in his horrid profession, and taking my word of honor not to betray him, in case I should, on consideration, decline his offer.

My situation was too desperate to admit of much debate, and on the second day of my acquaintance with him I was introduced to his associates, and initiated into some of their infamous practices. I found that a scheme had been in agitation amongst them for some time, in which I was to be the principle actor, for having discovered my situation, they determined on attaching me to their fraternity, and, taking their measures, too fatally succeeded. Accordingly I was equipped as a young man of fortune, and attended by Manning as a valet, and two others as tutor and footman, I set off and made the tour of Europe, in the course of which, by the successful practice of various frauds, we accumulated a large sum of money, and returned to our own country rich in the spoils of others.

The reason why Manning, who was in fact the leader of the party, chose the humble post of valet, on our tour, was, that he had in reality travelled a few years before in that capacity, and by appearing in his proper person, he both avoided the danger of being recognized, had he assumed any other character, and by renewing his former acquaintance, procured much useful information—his master, a very dissipated young man of fashion, had died at Florence, and leaving him beside some cash, a handsome wardrobe, he was induced to turn adventurer, and being aided by a good person and address, he had succeeded very well.

“ Soon after we returned to England, disgusted at some things that occurred, I withdrew myself from the party, but being soon reduced to distress, was obliged to have recourse to the friendship of Manning, who very readily, at different times, supplied my necessities, till I became indebted to him the sum of fifty guineas. I had not seen him for

a considerable time, when one day I received a note, appointing to meet him at a place mentioned, and that I should hear of something to my advantage; very much distressed at the time, I hastened to the rendezvous, and met him, when he informed me, that he had just received a letter from a brother of his, named Walter, who lived as a servant with, and was greatly in the confidence of, the Honorable Mr. Whitmore; that gentleman, he added, wanting to have a little matter done for him, which requires some address, has thought proper, through my brother, to honor me with his commands, and as a second person is necessary to carrying the affair into execution, I, my dear Harcourt, immediately fixed on you. I inquired what the business was, when he unfolded to me the most diabolical plan that ever entered the mind of man."

• "Good heaven!" exclaimed Lucy, ready to faint, while Alicia, unconscious of the action,

tion, caught her sister's arm, as if to obtain protection.

"Alas!" continued the wretched young man, observing their emotion, "what will you think of me when I acknowledge, that this deep laid piece of villany was no other than your destruction." "How!" cried Alicia, trembling, "were we to have been murdered?" "No, replied Harcourt, "not to be deprived of life but honor!" Lucy cast a fearful glance on him, and a silence of some minutes ensued, when resuming his discourse he said, "I wonder not that you should look on me with horror, let me then be brief and quit your sight for ever."

"Mr. Whitmore, it seems, was jealous of the affection manifested for you by your grandfather, Sir Augustus Marley, and to make you appear unworthy of it, and substitute hatred in its room, your fame was to be blasted, and Manning was the instrument fixed on to perform the deed, with whoever he

he could get to join him, and fifty guineas each was to be the reward; your affections were to be seduced, if possible, in order to effect an elopement with your own consent; if not, you were to be carried off by stratagem to France, where if you continued obstinate you were to be put into separate convents, and shut up for life; while a tale painting you in the most infamous light, and was to be invented for the ear of Sir Augustus, to corroborate all, Mrs. Aubry was to be imposed on by having every thing belonging to you secretly conveyed from her house, as if by yourselves. Perhaps you will not believe me when I say, that my soul revolted from the commission of such a deed, and I refused to have any share in it, when Manning sternly demanded the fifty guineas I owed him, and swore most vehemently that if I did not pay him immediately, or agree to perform the part he had required of me, by which means he would receive the entire hundred promised by Whitmore, he would thrust me into a prison, where I might end

my days—he did not leave me a moment for hesitation, and you know the result; but when I beheld the destined victims, how I execrated the wretch who could plan their ruin, and myself for the part I had undertaken in the execution of it; on reflection, however, I thought it possible to prevent it, and was actually meditating a discovery, from which I was only withheld by the repugnance I felt to own myself a villain to those who engaged my affection and esteem, when the proposal of Mrs. Aubry to introduce us into company terrified Manning, who had been detected in some of his gambling frauds in Scotland a few months before, and drove us from the house.”

“I took this opportunity of expostulating with him on the baseness of the crime we were engaged in, and proposed to him the renunciation of it, but I found that the beauty and innocence which awakened in my breast pity and remorse, had a different effect on him. He first laughed at my scruples, then becoming

becoming enraged at the arguments I used, he struck me, and I fell against the point of a rock, by which I received the wound which was afterwards made such a strange use of; to this last stratagem, however, I consented, for the sole purpose of gaining an opportunity to betray him, and was once on the point of making the discovery to Mrs. Aubry when she abruptly left me; but my plan was fixed and would have been executed, had not Mr. Campbell saved me the trouble as well as the shame of criminating myself. The fellow who passed for our servant, but was in fact one of Manning's associates, having quitted Mrs. Aubry's house in company with me, prevented me from attempting my escape, and obliged me to rejoin my vile companion, in whose service I was obliged to remain till the debt, or the greater part of it was paid, when taking an eternal farewell of him, I enlisted in a regiment which was under orders for foreign service, and am now on the march to join it. If I live, I will en-

deavour to redeem my honor, but if I die by the sword of the enemy, the rigour of my fate will be softened if I have your forgiveness, which I now most humbly entreat."

With these words he knelt before them, and the gentle sisters softened by the appearance of real penitence which he manifested, extended their hands in token of pardon and peace; he held both in his, while with uplifted eyes and still in his humble posture he besought heaven to bless and protect them. They now offered him money, which he declined, and after being informed of Mrs. Aubry's death, and the loss of their paternal fortune, he left them, declaring, that if ever it should be in his power to serve them, he would prove the sincerity of his esteem, and how much he had their interest at heart.

Next day the ladies being provided with a chaise by their loquacious landlady recommenced their journey towards London, where they

they arrived in safety, without any accident, or adventure of consequence sufficient to be related, and having provided themselves with a cheap and commodious lodging, after a few days repose began to consider of a mode of livelihood suitable to their age and sex; but this was a matter which admitted of much debate, and in the end involved them in perplexities, of which, on their setting out, they had not the least conception, and consequently knew not how to avoid; for the innocent mind must learn, by experience, what the guilty one suggests to itself.





CHAP. VIII.



DURING those distresses of the Marleys which were the effects of poverty alone, the usurper of their rights, though possessed of wealth, and all else that he had ever wished for, was not more happy than they were; his long projected high wrought plans were now compleated; he had little to employ his thoughts, and conscience, that blunt but sincere monitor, which sometimes wrests attention from the most hardened minds, now presented to his a dreadful retrospection, from which he strove in vain to turn to the enjoyment of present good, a heavy gloom pervaded

pervaded his imagination, and sat upon his haggard brow—he was restless—he was miserable.

In this state the wretched Whitmore had languished for several months, and began to be weary of existence, when his powers were again called into action, by a very unexpected circumstance. Amongst several letters which were brought him from the post, one in an unknown hand, contained matter which seemed to deprive him of every sense but that of sight, and he stood as one petrified; with his eyes, which seemed starting from their sockets, fixed on the letter, in one continued stare of amazement and affright for several minutes—he groaned—he read it a second time, and crushed it in his convulsed hand, while gnashing his teeth he uttered the word *damnation*. After a moment's pause he rung the bell for Walter, and that vile agent of his guilt quickly obeying the summons, he laid the letter before him, crying, in an agonized tone, "Look there, and see the end of all my labours."

labours." Walter took up the letter and read as follows.

TO THE HON. MR. WHITMORE.

SIR,

A friend of mine, lately deceased, having made me his executor, it chanced that in looking over his papers I discovered a certain deed, which is of infinite consequence to you, it is the counter part of a marriage article between Sir Augustus Marley, Baronet, of Marley Hall, and Alicia, the daughter and co-heir of Sir Edward de Gray, in which it appears that the estate of Marley Hall, granted by King Richard the First to the family of Marley, is entailed on the heirs male of that name; now, Sir, as I find there is a male heir in existence, who lately disputed the validity of your title to the said estate, and was cast for want of sufficient proof to establish his; and as this article sets all doubt aside, I thought it proper to acquaint you that it is

in my possession, and that justice requires of me to deliver it up to the young heir of Marley; the discovery of it is worth at least ten thousand pounds to either of you, and perhaps he may prove a generous donor; however, as I am a professional man, I always act cautiously, and shall continue silent on the matter till I have the honor of receiving your commands, which shall be strictly attended to by,

Your obedient and

very humble servant,

ZACHARIAH DOBS.

P. S. Perhaps you may find the counter part of the article amongst the papers of the late Sir Augustus.

"There," cried Whitmore, "what do you think of that?" "I think," replied Walter, "that if you give the sum of ten thousand pounds to Mr. Zachariah Dobs he will put you in possession of the deed." "Ten thousand

thousand pounds!" exclaimed Whitmore, in a deep inward voice, "I'd sooner cut my throat—" "Or his," said Walter. "Hah!" returned Whitmore, "that would make all secure—but murder!" "The scriptures call it a crying sin," replied Walter. "Yet," said Whitmore, after a long interval of silence, "yet, in our own defence —" He paused again, then rising up, "perhaps," said he, "this fellow is imposing on me, perhaps in league with Marley, I will seek for the counter part of the deed." "That would be a proof indeed," answered Walter. "Aye," cried Whitmore, "a damning proof!"

He hastened to the study of Sir Augustus, and made a strict search for the marriage article, which, however, he could not find; he applied to his wife, to know if her father had ever kept papers in any other part of the house, and she declaring that she did not know, he desisted at present from the search, and after holding a long consultation with

with Walter, determined to send him to treat with Mr. Dobs, respecting the deed, as he and his crafty agent both agreed that it would be very unsafe to open a correspondence by letter—On the following morning, therefore, Walter sat off for London, where Mr. Dobs resided.

Mr. Whitmore, as much to amuse the time which hung heavy on him, as from any other motive, recommenced his search amongst the papers of Sir Augustus, but still without success; the important marriage article did not appear. At night as he sat in conversation with his family, Mrs. Whitmore inquired what it was he was so anxious to find; he told her, but carefully concealed the real cause, by giving a false one.

“The apartments,” said Mrs. Whitmore, “which were lately occupied by the Miss Marleys, are those which in my mother’s life time were used by her and my father; there are closets to them which were furnished with

with books, of which they were both fond, and spent much of their time in reading; as I was very young when my mother died, I don't exactly remember the furniture of those closets, for I was never in them since her death, as my father removed to the other end of the house to sleep, and a foolish story prevailed amongst the servants, of their lady's haunting her former chamber, which effectually deterred me from going into it, however, I think there is a japaned cabinet in one of the closets, which may contain papers, and perhaps that you want."

"And the Miss Marleys," cried, Mr. Whitmore with quickness, "had the use of those closets." "I suppose so," she replied. "And I suppose," added he, "that they had sufficient curiosity to examine the cabinet, and every thing else that came in their way. Oh! how unlucky a circumstance is this."

The possibility of the paper about which he was so anxious, having fallen into the hands
of

of the Marleys, almost deprived him of that equanimity which he had always endeavoured to preserve before his family; and as he reflected on the subject, an exclamation involuntarily escaped him. They may have it, thought he, "and be ignorant of its value, but it may yet fall into other hands—another Dobs—or Marley himself—" Oh! if they have carried it away!" said he aloud.

"Can't you try to-morrow, my dear?" said Mrs. Whitmore. "Can't I rather try this moment?" cried he, starting up, and taking a light, with which he hastened to the chamber, but soon returning, said, "there is no cabinet in one of the closets, and the other is locked, do you know any thing of the key?" "Not I, indeed," replied his wife, "perhaps some of the servants have it." "I think," said he sharply, "you never know any thing that you ought to know." "Lord," she replied, "what a fuss is here about nothing, I suppose you'll be able to find the key to-morrow, if you have patience." "Patience,"

"Patience," cried he, "I must find the key to-night, or I will break the door." "With all my heart," said she, "but pray be less violent, and recollect, if you please, that it was never my province to look after keys."

Thus called to order, he recollected himself, and begging her to pardon him, rang the bell, and ordering Peter (who from a groom was now become house steward) to make inquiry for the key, waited with tolerable patience. Peter, however, returned with an account, that not any of the servants could tell what was become of it, but that old Margery said there was a communication between the closet he wanted to enter and the store-room at the end of the gallery, of which she sent him the key; thus furnished with the means of satisfying his ardent curiosity, Mr. Whitmore once more ascended the stairs.

"I believe," observed Miss Rachel, "we are never to be at peace while those Marleys exist."

exist." "What impudence," added Miss Jane, "if they have taken this paper." "Ah! sister," cried Miss Mary, "they would not do it." "That's more than you know, I'm sure," said Miss Whitmore. "I really think," added her mother, "that you, Mary, are ever too ready to become their advocate."

She had scarcely uttered these words when a loud noise, as of something tumbling down the staircase greatly alarmed them, and the young ladies instinctively ran into the hall with lights, when they beheld their father at the bottom of the stairs, laying senseless, his face covered with blood, and the candle and candlestick in different parts of the hall. A piercing and general shriek from the terrified females brought all the servants into the hall, some of whom lifting up their master, laid him on a sofa in the parlour, and began to use means for his recovery, having discovered that the blood which had so terrible an appearance proceeded from his nose.

His

His wife forgetting their late disagreement, hung weeping over him, and when he opened his eyes, and looked terrified around him, "My dear Charles," cried she, "what has happened to you?" "I saw your brother," replied he, in a faint voice. "My brother?" shrieked out Mrs. Whitmore, as she sunk beside her husband, "you have then seen a ghost?" He groaned, and the word ghost was quickly repeated, by all present, with accents of terror; the young ladies were greatly frightened, and Peter's limbs trembled so extremely that he was unable to stand. old Margery, whose deafness prevented her from knowing any more than that her master had fallen down stairs, had gone up to see if he had shut the door of the store-room, of which she was very careful, and finding it open she locked it, and putting the key in her pocket, came into the parlour to see how his honor did, and perceiving the general consternation she drew one of the footmen towards her, and asked if his honor was very bad. "No wonder if he is," bawled out the

servant

servant, "for he has seen a ghost." "A ghost," repeated Margery, "dear, dear, I never thought there was any such thing in this house, though they said long ago, that my lady used to appear, but I went about at all hours, and I have never seen any thing worse than myself—who did his honor see?" "My lady's brother," said one of the maids, "he met him on the stairs and flung him down." "Hold your tongue," replied Margery, "he never flung any body down, he would not hurt a dog; beside it is well known, that he did not die here, but was lost in the sea." The recollection made the old woman weep, and Mrs. Whitmore ordered her to quit the room, which she readily did, though not one of the servants would go with her.

Mr. Whitmore was now tolerably recovered, and endeavoured to dispel the fears of his family by saying that it might have been some shadow in that long gallery, which, as his nerves were weak all day, his fancy might have formed into a shape; he therefore entreated

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treated that the affair may not be spoken of, and bade the servants to retire; but, when Mrs. Whitmore inquired if the form he had seen bore the features of Henry Marley, he owned that he *thought* it did; she also drew from him a confession, that when he had encountered the figure, he retreated hastily along the gallery, had gained the stairs, and proceeded to the last landing, when fancying he heard the sound of footsteps behind him, in quickening his pace he missed a step and fell.

This being spoken in the presence of his daughters, they, with one voice declared, that go where they might, they would never spend another night at Marley Hall. He was excessively disconcerted at this declaration, and strove, but strove in vain, to calm their fears; they ordered their beds to be brought down to the parlour, which they could not be prevailed on to quit, and in the morning packed up their clothes for a journey to London, and though Mr. Whitmore made a merit of yielding

yielding to their entreaties for a removal, he was not ill pleased to have so fair a pretence for quitting the Hall, where he was fully convinced he had seen one of those imaginary beings so much spoken of and so little understood.

All the servants accompanied their master and mistress, except Peter, a boy who assisted in the stables, old Margery, and a housemaid named Susan. Peter was in such dread of the ghost, that he removed his bed to a room adjoining that of the women, and made the boy sleep with him. His fears produced a good effect however, he became religious and accompanied Margery to church, where he had never been since he came to the country, and where she had, through feebleness, been for some time unable to walk, and was now carried on horseback behind the good natured Peter, who kindly offered to convey her thither.

The story of the ghost had been circulated all over the country, and reached the ears of Mr. Elwood highly exaggerated, for it was said as how his Honor, Sir Augustus Marley, repenting in his grave of having left his estate away from his grandson, had appeared to 'Squire Whitmore, and ordered him to give it up, but the 'Squire refusing, was struck such a blow upon the head by the offended ghost, as deprived him of his senses, and made him tumble down stairs in a swoon. Mr. Elwood laughed at the absurdity of the tale, but as he knew that Whitmore and his family were gone off in a very abrupt manner, and that it was probable enough he might have been alarmed at somewhat, which, if investigated, would appear to be a simple operation of natural effects.

The good man wished extremely to learn the real fact, he was highly pleased, therefore, when he saw Margery at church, for though a very ignorant poor woman, her honesty and truth were well established, and from her
he

he was certain of obtaining genuine information. Accosting her as she came out of church, he congratulated her on being able to attend her duty, in which she had ever been very strict, and invited her to the parsonage, to take a cup of ale before she returned home; Margery flattered by the invitation, readily accepted it, and Peter saying that he had business a couple of miles off and would call for her; she walked home with Mr. and Mrs. Elwood, discoursing by the way of various matters, till at length Mr. Elwood introduced the subject of the ghost.

The old woman looked cautiously all round her, then laying her hand on Mr. Elwood's arm, "I'll tell your Reverence," says she, "as sure as that we're both alive there is not one word of truth in it, but this is between ourselves, for I have my own reasons for not grudging them all to be well frightened, if right took place 'Squire Whitmore is not the person that should be Master of Marley Hall, and it does my heart good to see them

all out of it, for I believe your Reverence guesses, as well as I, that the poor dear youth who was obliged to go fighting beyond sea was foully dealt with, and, if people could stir in their graves, it would be no wonder they should when there are such doings, but I well know they can't."

They were now arrived at the Parsonage and Mrs. Elwood setting before Margery a cup of mead and a seed-cake, the parson began to question her farther; she then informed him fully of all that had past, and added, "So an please your Reverence, I being so deaf did not know any thing about his honor seeing a ghost, and being very careful about the old store room, because his Honor Mr. Henry's picture is there, (ever so long) I went up to see if the door was shut, and it was well I did, for the 'Squire left it wide open, so when I came down, lack-a-day they were all so frightened, Madam was sitting on the floor, and the Misses all in a bunch together, and Peter with his teeth knocking together

together, sitting in a corner, so they told me how his honor seen Mr. Henry's ghost, but still I was not a bit afraid. Well, next day, when all were gone for London, I went up to the store-room, (as I do every day) to look at the picture, and to wipe the dust from his dear sweet face, when as sure as can be the minute I opened the door I guessed how things were, and that it was the picture itself that frightened the 'Squire; so I called up Susan, because I have a great regard for the girl, she is poor Joe's sweetheart, and I bade her look in at the door, and so she knew at once that it was the picture was taken for a ghost, but I charged her for her life not to tell, and so she pretends to be as frightened as Peter." "Indeed, my good Margery," replied Mr. Elwood, "you have cleared up this matter very properly, and I am glad you have concealed the truth, for who knows but some good may arise to our young friend, out of the consternation this affair has created." "I did not think of that before," said she, and only did it out of spite, but may

hap some good may come out of it, and I wish Peter was more frightened, for whatever mischief was done he knows of, and fear may make him confess."

Mr. Elwood smiled, and said, he had thought of that himself, but bade her hold her peace, lest an over zeal might injure the cause she wished to serve: "I will discourse with Peter about it," added he, "and if you think I can, unknown to him, be admitted into the room where the picture is, I will go over to the Hall to-morrow." "I warrant you," said Margery, "he'll know nothing about it, nor any one but Susan and I, for he spends the most part of every day at the farm hard by, where his wife lives; and as for the lad, I can send him to market while your Reverence comes over."

Peter soon after making his appearance, Mr. Elwood asked him in to take a drink, and after some other discourse, "This is a strange affair, Peter," said he, "that has happened

happened at the Hall, I gave no credit to it till Margery has assured me that it is a fact."

"Ah! Sir," replied Peter, affecting to laugh, "I believe master had taken a cup, for sure we all know there are no such things as ghosts." "That," replied Mr. Elwood, "is a matter that I am very far from being convinced of."

The countenance of Peter assumed a most ghastly appearance, while in a faltering accent he cried, "and do you, Sir, think there are such things?" "Indeed," replied Mr. Elwood, "I never saw a ghost, but I have heard people of veracity tell things so circumstantially, as to incline me greatly to believe in such appearances, we have many remarkable instances on record of the spirits of the dead rising to give information in cases of murder, and other heinous crimes, where human evidence had failed; nay, in the Holy Scriptures, even in the New Testament, a spirit is spoken of in a very unequivocal manner."

Mr. Elwood was proceeding, when the tankard which Peter held dropped from his hand, and he was seized with a fit of shivering, like an ague: Old Margery who had not heard a word of what passed, repeatedly asked what was the matter, while Mr. Elwood, as it were to encourage the terrified domestic, said, "but when our consciences are clear we have no cause to be afraid, and though one should rise from the dead, we who are guiltless may rest in peace." "Oh! Sir," cried Peter, "you have convinced me of what I doubted all my life before, for sure a learned gentleman like you would not be staggered at those things if there was any certainty of their being false." "I have not held up the doctrine as truth," said Mr. Elwood. "No, Sir," replied Peter, "I know you would not wish to terrify poor folks, but what you have said has so well convinced me, that I am resolved, please God, to write to my master, to desire he may get some one else to sleep at the Hall, for I will not." "I thought you could not write, Peter?" said Mr.

Mr. Elwood, looking hardly at him. "A little, Sir, indeed very badly," stammered out Peter, while a deep blush manifested his confusion, and he hurried Margery away.

Mr. Elwood asked his wife if she had noted what passed. "Yes," said she, "and am more than ever convinced that some great villany has been acted." "It is very plain," he replied, "and I make no doubt but Providence will in time bring about a full discovery."

The good divine was punctual to his appointment with Margery next day, and she, lighting a candle, led him up stairs, saying, that she had darkened the room to show him the thing as it really happened; then opening the door, the tall figure of Henry Marley seemed to approach them. Mr. Elwood entered, and the windows being opened, he saw the deception more clearly, the figure, which was a full length somewhat larger than life, and in a very pale blue drape-

pery, was in the attitude of stepping forward, from a dark wooded back ground, which by the partial light of a candle thrown on the figure seemed mixed with the darkness of the chamber; it had fallen out of its great gilt frame, which was rested against the wall at a distance, while Margery in her care of the portrait, had drawn a table into the center of the room, and rested it against it, directly opposite the door, in order, as she said, to let it have air.

Mr. Elwood commended her attention, but said, to prevent all possibility of the truth being discovered, he would now hang the picture up, which after putting it in its frame, he accordingly did, placing it near the windows, which he desired Margery to open frequently for its preservation, saying, "I hope yet to see it taken down, and placed in its proper situation by Augustus Marley." "God send! God send!" cried Margery, with the utmost fervour. The parson then enjoining Susan to secrecy, departed from the Hall.

As

As all the people of distinction were about to quit the Metropolis for the summer when the Whitmore's arrived there, it was deemed very ungentle for them to remain, and a tour round the different watering places was planned by the young ladies, in which they were accompanied by their mother, leaving Mr. Whitmore in town, who had sufficient business on his hands to endeavour to bring Dobs to more moderate terms than he had demanded and persisted in, declaring that he could not satisfy his conscience in giving up the deed for a less sum, than ten thousand pounds, which would be the raising of his family, and might extenuate, if any thing could, the guilt of defrauding the right heir, to whom he would present the paper, and trust to his honor for a reward, if the sum he required was not given to him, for it was not a trifle should make him a villain, who was all his past life an honest man. Whitmore happening to have seven thousand by him, offered that, but it was rejected, and while they disputed the other three, an account of

Augustus Marley being shot, at Fontenoy, threw a damp on the negotiation, but Mr. Whitmore making strict inquiry, was soon convinced that he was only wounded, and thought it necessary to keep up his connexion with Mr. Dobs till the young soldier's fate should be decided; but on calling at his house as usual, he was informed by an illiterate servant woman, that her Master and Mistress were gone into the country, a great way off, and would not return for a long time, she believed, not till the cold weather.

Mr. Whitmore was greatly disappointed, but comforted himself with the hope that Dobs had heard also of the young man's danger, and would either moderate his high expectations on that account, or venturing to wait the chance of his recovery, apply again for the ten thousand; in either case he made no doubt of hearing from him; and, should Marley die, and the deed be produced, a new question would arise respecting the right of inheritance amongst the females, and a contention

contention with Lucy and Alicia, whom he knew must be in distressed circumstances, had nothing in it very formidable to him who was rich.

CHAP. IX.

VARIOUS were the disappointments encountered by the amiable unfortunate sisters. They had applied at boarding schools for employment as assistants, but the Mistresses of those seminaries were either already supplied, or, cautious of engaging young women who, when questioned, could give no other account of themselves than that through an unforeseen train of misfortunes they were reduced

reduced to the necessity of appropriating the education they received, when, in prosperity, to their support in adversity ; but, when asked if there was any person who would answer for their good conduct, they were wholly at a loss, and on this account rejected. The same cause prevented their reception, as governesses in genteel families, and in the time that elapsed during the many applications which they made, their little stock of cash was exhausted, and all the terrors of extreme want assailed them.

To add to their sorrows, the health of Alicia began to decline, and a miserable death seemed to be the only period, he had to expect to her sufferings, while Lucy incessantly wept over her beloved companion, whom she could neither relieve nor comfort.

The woman with whom they lodged knowing they had vainly sought employment, and were consequently distressed, informed them one day, that if they understood embroidery

broidery, and other fine needle work, she could put them in the way of earning a good deal, as a milliner with whom she was acquainted was inquiring for a work woman of that description, "and," added she, "as the work would be brought to my house, I would pass my word for its safety." They thanked the woman, and both declaring their ability to perform any kind of fine needle-work, expressed a wish to be employed immediately, and Lucy was accordingly introduced to the Milliner, by the name of Miss Williams, and brought home a suit of linen to be worked for a lady of quality, for which, if properly executed, she was to be handsomely paid.

Alicia, ill as she was, insisted on doing part of it for the sake of expedition, and the prospect of support which this afforded them cheering their spirits, their task was performed so much sooner than the milliner expected, and so much to her satisfaction, that, beside the promised payment, she added

a present, saying, that such industry ought to be encouraged.

Elated by success in their new employments, the sisters proceeded with redoubled ardour, and thus procured themselves a comfortable support. As the weather was very fine, Lucy, to save coach-hire, walked to and from the milliner's, when one morning she perceived a very genteel young man following her; she went into the shop, and he into a coffee-house opposite; she now thought that chance only had led them the same way, but as she entered her lodgings she again saw him close by her, this created some alarm, as she was apprehensive her situation in life might expose her to insult, and this was the point in which her fortitude failed.

As she had no business out, however, for several days, she forgot the circumstance till she went home with her work, when as she stood in the milliner's shop glancing her eye towards the coffee-house, she beheld the
young

young gentleman in the window evidently watching her; more alarmed than before she hastened home, resolved in her mind not to venture out on foot, at least for some time. She found that Alicia had been very ill during her absence, and the woman of the house was sitting with her, both which circumstances prevented her from mentioning the uneasiness she was under at being again followed by the stranger, who, however, did not attempt to speak to her, or behave in any manner impolite, more than by closely following her till he saw her enter her abode.

After the woman of the house left them, Alicia informed her sister, that sitting at the window, she had seen Whitmore accompanied by his son pass by, "and the sight of the wretch," said she, "brought Harcourt's story so fresh into my mind, that only for the kind assistance of Mrs. Loyd, who chanced to come in at the instant, I believe I should have fainted."

When

When their work was again finished Lucy appeared somewhat embarrassed about the mode of conveying it home, saying, that she would beg of Mrs. Loyd to take it for her, only that it would be necessary to receive directions about the next parcel. Alicia inquired what objection she had to go herself as usual; and Lucy for the first time mentioned the young gentleman, whom she called her escort. Alicia then said she would go, "I can take a coach this time," said she, "and I will know the way in future," then drawing a black bonnet close about her face, "my person," she added, "will not be so apt to attract attention as yours, nor my pale cheeks invite the eye to a second glance." Lucy thought otherwise, as she gazed on the lovely figure that stood before her, and imprinting a kiss on that cheek, which was faded indeed yet extremely interesting, "would to God," cried she, "that part of the healthful bloom which glows on mine could be transferred to my beloved sister's, but heaven I trust will restore to you your own."

Alicia

Alicia now set off, and on presenting the work to the Miliner, "I hope," said the woman, "nothing has happened to Miss Williams, is she well?" "My sister," replied Alicia, "was unable to come out to-day, and sent me to receive your commands, but thank heaven she is well." "Your sister," said the Milliner, "but indeed I should have sought no further than your face for that information, you are so extremely like her; I'm sorry she did not come, for I thought to have a laugh with her, for you must know she has made a conquest." "Indeed," cried Alicia, "pray, Madam, of whom?" "There," said the Milliner, "my information ends, for indeed I am ignorant, but however he is a very elegant young man, and calls himself Vernon, here is a waistcoat, which he entreated me to get embroidered for him by Miss Williams; he asked me several questions respecting her, in which if I could have informed him, I would, they were so modestly, so delicately proposed; however I could say nothing but from conjecture,

jecture, in which he agreed with me, that she was born to a different situation from that she is now in."

Alicia blushed, "pardon me," added the Milliner, "I would not indeed hurt your feelings, or pry into any secret you may wish to conceal, but is not this really the case?" "It is," replied Alicia, "but however humbled our fortune, I entreat you to believe, and if this information is intended for Mr. Vernon, to assure him that the dignity of virtue yet is ours, and that we never shall depart from it." "As I hope for mercy," cried the Milliner emphatically, "the most remote hint of wishing it were otherwise has not escaped him; nay, I will venture to say that if he has thought of any kind of connexion, it is honorable; it appears romantic to be sure, yet I give it as my most sincere opinion."

She now produced some work, which beside the waistcoat Alicia undertook, and having discharged the coach on her arrival,

set

set out on foot towards home; she soon perceived that she was followed by a gentleman whom she believed to be Mr. Vernon, and when come to the door of her lodging, on looking towards him, he perceived his mistake, and exclaimed, "Heavens! another angel!"

Alicia informed her sister of all she had learned during her excursion out, adding, that she envied her so brilliant a conquest as the handsome Mr. Vernon. "He is really a sweet looking fellow," cried Lucy, "and just what, if I had met with him a year since, I would have set my cap at; but now I must arm my heart against the approaches of all his sex, for one who may be on a level with a poor embroider, cannot be a husband for Lucy Marley, and those who were once her equals, would look with scorn upon the poor embroiderer." Tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke, which striving to disperse, she set about her work.

The

The waistcoat being finished, was carried home by Alicia, who received payment for it, and took more work. As she passed thro' the streets on her return, her eye was attracted by the name of Fenwick, engraved on a large brass plate, affixed to the door of a very handsome house. "It is the house of my grandfather Hopton, thought she, and of my dear aunt Fenwick, who was a second mother to me; alas! they are all gone, who would have sheltered me from the storms of life." The melancholy reflections that crowded on her mind were visible on her countenance when she entered her room, and alarmed the affectionate heart of Lucy, to whom, when she gave an explanation, she also proposed to pay a visit on the following Sunday, to Mr. Fenwick. "He may be of some use to us," said she, "he may countenance, he may protect us; it would be something to be known by a man of respectability, at present we appear as outcasts of society." Lucy agreed to the proposal, and the visit was determined on.

That

That night as they sat at supper Mrs. Loyd (the woman of the house) entering their apartment, presented a letter which she said was that moment given to her by a gentleman for them; Lucy took it, "there is no post mark on it," said she, "or I would suppose it came from Maria Campbell, as she only knows our address, I do not know which of us it is for, as it is only directed to Miss Williams." "No matter," said Alicia, "pray open it, you are quite welcome to my share of the secret, if there is any." Lucy broke the seal, and to her utter astonishment found a bank note for a hundred pounds, enveloped in a cover which contained these words.

"Amiable sufferers! I address you both, perhaps you will see me no more, I am quitting London, but cannot go in peace with the idea that you may be in distress, accept therefore the enclosed, as a tribute of esteem from your unknown but highly respectful friend,

E. VERNON."

That

"Good-God!" cried Alicia, "what are we to think of this man?" "That he is the most generous, or the most designing, of his sex," replied Lucy, "for the case admits no medium; but what shall we do with the note?" "Return it to be sure," said Alicia. "How?" asked Lucy. "Seal it up in a cover," returned Alicia, "and leave it at the Milliner's, I dare say she will either see him, or know where to find him." It was accordingly put in a cover, on which was written—

"Sir,

"We entreat you to believe that we are impressed with a most grateful sense of your very kind intentions, but must decline your present. We have the honor to remain, &c.

L. A. WILLIAMS.

Alicia carried it to the Milliner's next morning, and was informed that Mr. Vernon had taken his waistcoat the evening before, saying that he was to leave town at a very early

early hour next day, he besought her to shew every kindness in her power to the young ladies, and as he would pass through London some time hence, he would call on her to know how they were, and, if possible, who, which should direct his future conduct: "He added," continued the Milliner, "that he did not expect you would receive his protection, but he had a mother who would glory in being the guardian of distressed innocence."

The sisters made many comments on these matters, but, after all, resolved to conceal their name, which could be of no consequence to any one to know, at least to Mr. Vernon, or his mother, if there really was such a person, who would wish to serve them. but of this they had great doubts, and even fears, lest some snare was laying for the ruin of one or both of them.

Sunday being arrived, they dressed themselves very neat and plain, and after attending divine service, walked arm in arm to Mr.

Fenwick's, not without palpitating hearts lest they should meet such a reception as would wound their already depressed spirits. They rapped at the door, and inquired of the servant who opened it, if Mr. Fenwick was at home; he replied in the affirmative, but eyeing them closely, added, that his Lady was gone to St. James's church, they did not know before that Mr. Fenwick had married a second wife, and were much embarrassed at the intelligence, however, on saying that it was Mr. Fenwick they wanted to see, the servant conducted them into a parlour, till he should acquaint his master, who, he said, was busy with some sea captains.

In a very short time Mr. Fenwick entered the room, but so altered that they scarcely recollected him; he had been an open countenanced, cheerful looking man, he was now pale and dejected. As it was impossible he could recollect them whom he had not seen since they had attained the age of women, they informed him who they were—he looked

at

at them very attentively, "My dear children," said he, "I should never have known you, I am very glad to see you, how long have you been in London?" They told him. "I was informed," said he, "that you were under the care of a friend in Scotland, for I have heard all your misfortunes, and was inquiring what became of you."

They now informed him of the death of that friend, their consequent distress, and present situation, all which seemed to give him a great deal of concern. "Ah! my dear girls," said he, "you and I have lost a friend that would soften these calamities, had heaven been pleased to spare her to us, you might then have taken your former situation here—but she is gone—and I——" He made a sudden pause, as if too much affected to proceed. "Indeed," said Alicia, "I do think my aunt was the most severe loss we ever experienced, for her maternal tenderness was more valuable to us than any thing we have since possessed, though we had for-

tune and connexions which are now no more."

"Had she left me a child," cried Mr. Fenwick, (not attending to what Alicia had said) "I would have been less unhappy, I would not have entered on a second marriage; but a poor, unconnected, solitary being as I was, I had no other resource—I now have children—my wife is a fine young woman, but—she is very unlike her, whom I shall never cease to lament." Mr. Fenwick very kindly offered every assistance in his power, to the young ladies, declaring, that whatever had been dear to his beloved wife, was so to him. They expressed much gratitude and rose to take their leave, but he insisted that they should spend the day with him, and Mrs. Fenwick soon after coming home, he introduced them.

"Nieces," repeated she, "to the late Mrs. Fenwick?" "Yes, my dear," said he. "Well, I hope so," she replied. "Hope

so, Margaret?" cried Mr. Fenwick, "why, my dear, should a doubt arise?" "Well, well," replied the lady, "I have no doubt, for really the young ladies (courtesying to them) have the appearance of gentlewomen, but I have heard of impostors being introduced as cousins; however, I am not easily imposed on."

This scandalous insinuation greatly disconcerted Mr. Fenwick, and hurt the young ladies, who, wholly at a loss what to say, continued silent, while the lady of the house, first adjusting her hair, which was beautifully luxuriant, and evidently admiring her whole figure in a large glass, sat down and chatted very familiarly till dinner, after which she led her guests to the drawing-room, where three very fine children were brought to her, the fair sisters caressed them more than their mother, who soon ordered them back to their nursery.

"I think," said Alicia, "though it is a long time since I was an inhabitant of it, I could find my way to the nursery if the house has not been altered." "It has not," replied Mrs. Fenwick, "been altered in its form, but I found many alterations necessary in the furniture; your aunt, I believe, let every thing stand as in her mother's day, for I found every thing horridly gothic, this room in particular." "I recollect perfectly," said Lucy, "that the furniture of this room was crimson Genoa damask, and I thought it very grand." "Aye," replied Mrs. Fenwick, "it was done round too with a mixed fringe of gold and crimson, and looked so immensely heavy, that I could not bear to sit in the room till I had it altered, so I got this elegant light chintz, very much indeed against Mr. Fenwick's liking, who was greatly attached to his old fashioned finery, and thought to have done as he liked; however, when a young girl marries a man so much her senior, the least privilege she can have is to do as she likes, and this I certainly expected, when

I consented to become the wife of Mr. Fenwick, but how was I disappointed, when, instead of the sober citizen I took him for, he proved to be an imperious tyrant at home, and a man of gallantry abroad, ready to lavish his property on any courtesan who would take the trouble of flattering him; I very soon convinced him, however, that I would not be the easy domestic drudge he intended to make of me."

The footsteps of Mr. Fenwick on the stairs put a stop to the further indiscretions of his silly wife, who was thus villifying a too indulgent husband, to persons whom she had never before seen. "My dear," said he, as he entered the room, "here is a card from Mrs. Lyfter, inviting you to a drum at her house on Thursday night." "Yes," replied Mrs. Fenwick, "she wants to display all her finery to me, because she knows, and so does every body, that I can't do those things; she came to take me an airing too in her new chariot, because she knew it was breaking

my heart to be dragged about in the old rumbling coach, but if I speak of wanting any thing like other people, I'm told of extravagance, and my children, as if I was to be made miserable to heap up fortunes for them; but I know very well for what I am kept so mean, it is to spare money for the vilest of purposes." Her voice failed, and she took out her handkerchief to dry her tears. "Indeed, Margaret," said the abashed husband, "you create for yourself much imaginary, and for me much real sorrow."

Lucy and Alicia were by this time heartily tired of their visit, and as soon as they could with propriety after tea, took their leave. Mr. Fenwick in seeing them down stairs inquired their address, saying, that he would call on them very soon: "For," added he, "I cannot see you here as often as I wish." They made warm acknowledgments for his kindness, and returned to their own humble but peaceful abode.

Next

Next day they were visited by the worthy Mr. Fenwick, who entreated them to use his friendship in any manner which they should deem advantageous to them, and at parting presented them with a packet, which was directed for Lucy and Alicia Marley, in the hand writing of their aunt. "I know not its contents," said he, "but suppose it is somewhat belonging to your mother," then taking his leave left them to examine it.

With a kind of reverential awe Lucy broke the seal, and discovered several letters of her mother's to her aunt, the so much sought for marriage certificate, trinkets of various kinds, a bank note for fifty pounds, and a beautiful miniature of her father: The emotions awakened at sight of these things were too powerful to be restrained, they pressed the precious reliques to their lips, they wept over them and blessed the memory of those to whom they had belonged. The letters which so fully expressed the delicate sentiments of their mother, were read over with the utmost

veneration for the gentle writer, with whom they were now first made acquainted, and of whose loss they were never so acutely sensible; her bracelets, her ear-rings, every trinket which had been hers, they considered as invaluable, and divided between them, with a scrupulous exactness, till casting their tearful eyes upon their father's picture, they sighed responsively; "Alas!" exclaimed Lucy, "what is to be done, we cannot both possess this dear resemblance, and which of us can part with it, or bear to deprive the other of such a treasure?"

This point might have remained long undecided, if Alicia, in parcelling the letters also, had not again observed the note, "hence," cried she, "my sister, is the means of contenting us both, we will get it copied, we will each have a likeness of our lamented parent." This only difficulty got over, they were now highly pleased with their acquisition, and experienced much satisfaction in their hours of relaxation from the needle, in
looking

looking over their little hoard. Lucy being freed from her apprehensions, of encountering Mr. Vernon, resumed her employment of carrying home the work, when taking up a news-paper at the Milliner's shop, an advertisement caught her attention, and borrowing the paper, she took it to Alicia, who on reading it, declared how suitable she thought the offer it contained would be to her—it ran thus. 'A lady of quality about to retire to the country for the summer, wants a young woman, as companion, who can be well recommended; one who can speak and read French fluently will be preferred, and handsomely rewarded, apply, &c.'

"This would recruit my health," said Alicia, "the country air, I'm certain, would restore me, and I should return quite strong."

"It was that consideration," replied Lucy, "that made me think of proposing it to you, for otherwise we may do well enough by our work, and are much happier together than if we were, as at first we intended, in separate

rate employments, but I see, my dear, the city air has an ill effect on your constitution and I hope a few months in the country at this delightful season would restore you." "It is what I wish for extremely," replied Alicia, "but to leave you here alone would be a great affliction to me." "Don't think of that," said Lucy, "my spirits are pretty good, you'll find I shall do very well; you'll not be so far off but I may often hear from you, and I shall expect to see you return in health, these considerations will console me for your absence."

Alicia thus encouraged, wrote a note to Mr. Fenwick, requesting to see him as soon as possible, and he readily obeying the summons, she informed him of her wish to engage with the lady who had advertised for a companion, adding her motives for it, and desiring him to answer for her character as Miss Williams. He appeared shocked at the request, and offered, if she thought the country air was necessary for her, to send her, at his

own

own expence to any place she chose ; but, with many acknowledgments she declined his offer, and prevailed on him to gratify her in the request she had made, though with infinite reluctance ; she next made the necessary application, as directed by the newspaper, and was admitted to the presence of Lady Jane Hammond, a widow of five and forty, in high health and spirits ; her Ladyship seemed greatly struck with the genteel figure and easy manners of Alicia, who, (on being ascertained of her good conduct by Mr. Fenwick) she immediately engaged, and in a week set out for her country-seat, in the neighbourhood of Southampton, where they arrived, safe after a pleasant journey, well pleased with each other.

Her Ladyship at first rallied her fair companion on her low spirits, saying, that whenever she found young girls sounnaturally grave she always concluded that they were in love, but Alicia declaring with more earnestness than was necessary, that it was not her case, and

and that the depression of her spirits arose from her being for the first time separated from a beloved sister. Lady Jane looked incredulously at her, yet perceiving that her mind was seriously wounded, good naturedly forbore to jest on it.

Lucy now left alone in her little apartments, found the time pass very heavily, and for the sake of a little variety accepted of Mrs. Fenwick's frequent invitations, who, contrary to all expectation, seemed to have taken a great fancy for her company, and used to insist on her bringing her work, and spending whole days with her.

She had heard twice from Alicia, who was absent about a month, when, one day as she sat at work a carriage stopping at the door attracted her attention, and looking out of the window she was surprised to see a very elegant coach, with a coronet on it, out of which stepped Mr. Vernon, who handed a lady into the house; she had not time to recover her
astonish-

astonishment, when they entered the room, and the gentleman bowing low, presented the lady as his mother, then addressing himself to her, said, "this, my dear Madam, is the young lady who has so much interested me, perhaps she will accept your friendship, tho' she has rejected mine." Lucy covered with blushes, and almost at a loss how to act, presented chairs, which they accepting, the lady made an apology for the abruptness of their visit, saying, "we drove immediately here from the Milliner's for whom you work, the few lines we found there, enclosing my son's intended gift, having so far excited my admiration as well as curiosity, that I would not return home without seeing you." "I am happy, Madam," replied Lucy, "that my conduct has met your approbation." "So much indeed," said the lady, "that I come to offer you my friendship and protection, which, when I inform you who I am, I hope you will not scruple to accept."

She was proceeding, when as she sat close to the table on which Lucy had thrown her work, she inadvertently took it up, and discovered

covered the miniature of her father, that lay underneath; it was the original, and encircled by small diamond sparks, the glitter of which induced the stranger to look at the picture, which she no sooner did, than she exclaimed, "Merciful heaven! it is Henry Marley, and you are," said she, looking at the agitated Lucy—"His daughter," feebly articulated the astonished girl. "Oh! my dearest child," cried the lady, clasping her to her bosom, "and is it thus at last I find you?"

She wept, and Lucy greatly affected at being recognized by a friend of her father's, though she did not know who it was, also shed tears, when the young gentleman gently separating them, said, "and will not the sister of my Augustus acknowledge her brother's friend? Shall not Stanmore now claim a share in the friendship of Miss Marley?" "Stanmore!" she repeated, and yielded her cheek to the fervent pressure of his lips. "Yes, my love," replied his delighted mother, "it is Stanmore, it is my Edward, whose

whose humane sollicitude for a distressed and virtuous stranger has thus happily brought us together, never, I trust in heaven, to part till death."

Lady Stanmore again embracing Lucy, inquired for her sister, and being informed where she was gone, "well," said she, "we must send for her; but, come, my dear, get ready to quit this place immediately." "I shall attend your Ladyship as soon as you please," replied Lucy, "and can come again to pack up my things." "You can so," said Lady Stanmore, "get your cloak, therefore, and come away."

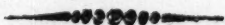
Lucy, after making some alteration in her dress, did as she was desired, and drove with her noble friends to St. James's-Square, when they both told her that she was at home. Lady Stanmore taking her fair guest to her dressing-room, conversed more freely with her, than in the presence of her son. She said that they were but just returned from Scotland,

Scotland, where they had in vain sought for her and Alicia, not knowing of Mrs. Aubry's death till they arrived at her house, where they were entertained by the present owner who, however, could give no account of them, but that they had gone away; we returned therefore," said she, "greatly disappointed and alarmed for your fate.

When we arrived in town, my son, whose spirits I observed for some time to be uncommonly depressed, confided to me the secret of his heart: He had seen a young girl, who made that impression on it which he had always foretold would be instantaneous, he found her in a situation somewhat equivocal. He was unhappy, and applied to me for council and consolation. With a palpitating heart lest he had fallen a victim to hypocrisy, I accompanied him to the Milliner's—you know what has followed, and I am blessed beyond my most sanguine hopes in finding you, my Lucy, the object of his passion."

Lucy's

Lucy's blushes made a more eloquent reply than words could express, and Lord Stanmore with transport received her passive hand from his mother, when they met in the dining-room, without any of the happy trio uttering a word on the interesting subject. In a few days they left town, after Lucy had paid a farewell visit at Mr. Fenwick's, and took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Loyd, who promised to forward Alicia's next letter to Stanmore Park.



CHAP. X.

PURE air, exercise, and the cheerful conversation of Lady Jane Hammond, had soon a very visible effect on the beautiful countenance of Alicia, where the rose of health began again to bloom, to the entire satisfaction of her indulgent patroness, who was become greatly attached to her, and made her time pass so pleasantly, as to leave her no other wish than that she could share her happiness with her sister.

One day as she sat writing in a small room adjoining her ladyship's dressing-room, she
heard,

heard a servant announce Lord Ashton, who immediately entering, Lady Jane exclaimed, "Dear Ashton, I rejoice to see you, but how in fortune's name have I come by the amazing happiness of seeing you in this retired spot?" "Don't you know," replied he, "that I was ever fond of retirement, which must be particularly attractive in the society of Lady Jane." "Out you wretch," cried she, "I am much too old to be flattered by such a stripling as you, reserve your fine speeches, therefore, for the girls, and tell me honestly to what chance I owe this visit which you know gives me pleasure." "Honestly then," said he, "I know not what better to do with myself, than to come hither and spend a week pleasantly with you, previous to my quitting England I believe for a long time." "Well, that's a good boy," replied Lady Jane, "but whither are you going? I thought you had enough of travelling." "In truth," said he, "my inclination did not lead towards a foreign land, but my own country is rendered disagreeable by constant differences

ences with my father. "What any thing new?" asked Lady Jane. "That fortune," replied the young man, "that fell to him so unaccountably, which he does not, now at least want, I wished him to share with those whose actual birth-right it is, and he has quarrelled with me."

"Generous creature!" sighed out Alicia. "O most romantic!" exclaimed Lady Jane, bursting into a fit of laughter, "and so your Lordship would have drained the very life blood from your father's heart, or, what is still dearer, his gold, to distribute to the poor; dear Ashton, do you not know him yet?" "I should have known at least," said he, "that a request of mine however trivial would not be complied with; and, as God shall judge me, I know not how I have incurred his hatred." "I could inform you," cried Lady Jane, "but say, how is Mamma, does she wear her new honors gracefully? Which have they, increased or diminished her native haughtiness?" "Dear Madam,"
he

he replied, "is it not my mother you question me about, how, therefore, can I answer? Nay, the only kindness I have received since my return to England, has been from her."

"Amiable creature!" said Lady Jane ironically, "to behave with kindness to such a son; and pray how does Lady Arabella, and Lady Jane, and so forth?—Poor Lady Alicia, I find, has failed in her aim on young Stanmore." "Indeed," replied Lord Ashton, "I know very little of them, and shall know less, for, by the interference of my mother, I have got an establishment which makes me in a great measure independent, and I have determined on going abroad immediately to try and forget the vexations I have met with at home."

"Really, my dear Ashton," said the Lady, "you are linked to a sad set, and as I know you to be domestically inclined, I pity you from my heart, your father is an odious wretch, I detest him, and think I could enjoy the power of wringing his heart as he wrung mine,

mine, but that is impossible, for his hardened breast never entertained one tender sentiment." "This, my good Lady Jane," replied the youth, "is, you know, a subject on which I cannot enter, indulge me, therefore, in calling another.—Pray how do you pass your time here." "Indeed," said she, tolerably pleasant, "though my good daughter, Lady Clareville, commiserating my deplorable situation, has written me a long letter, declaring her fears that I shall fall into the vapours, and inviting me to her enchanted castle, where she avers all the loves and graces have fixed their abode, but I have hitherto been obstinate, and, like a good housewife, preferred my own roof to any other, I am not wholly alone, however, I have got a companion, an excessive pretty creature, and if she was quite happy, which I fear is not the case, would be immensely pleasing; you'll see her at dinner, and I wish from my soul you may fall in love with her."

"Heavens! what a wish!" cried he.

"Why,

"Why, child," she added, "you would not meet her equal amongst a thousand Lady Belles, and Sufans, and so forth; I'm convinced she is well born, for gentlewoman breaks out in all her actions, and as for her want of fortune, you have sufficient to make up for that, then I should so exult over the blasted hopes of his Lordship, who, no doubt has culled out some fine rich silly heiress for you; Oh! how I should delight in wishing joy."

Lord Ashton began a reply, but Alicia now feeling very sensibly the impropriety of having remained within hearing of the conversation which had passed, silently and cautiously retired, determined on excusing herself from attending dinner. When the hour drew near, therefore, she sent an apology, but Lady Jane, who was not easily put off, when she had fixed her heart on any thing, came immediately to her apartment, and insisted on her appearance. "I know very well," said she, "that you are not fond of ap-

pearing before strangers, but this is only my nephew, Lord Ashton, he is a very pretty young man I assure you, and come to spend some time with us."

Alicia now convinced that it was better to comply with a good grace, accompanied Lady Jane to the drawing-room; but, how was she surprised when she beheld in the person of Lord Ashton—Augustus Whitmore, that youth whom she had accidentally met in the wood of Marley Hall, and never had forgotten: He seemed equally surprised for a moment, but, as if recollecting himself, Miss Marley!" said he, "I cannot sure mistake." She courtesied and turned towards the door to retire, "How is this," cried Lady Jane, "stay, dear Miss Williams, and explain this matter." "That gentleman, Madam, can as well satisfy your curiosity," replied Alicia, "I am already sufficiently humbled." Lady Jane no longer opposed her, and she retired.

"Ashton,"

"Ashton!" cried her Ladyship inquisitively. Clasp- ing his hands he exclaimed, "it is Miss Marley, one of the injured orphans, whose property my father unjustly holds." "Good heaven!" cried Lady Jane, "is it possible? alas! my poor Alicia, little did I think from what source your sorrows sprung." She hastened to her apartment, where she found her bathed in tears. "My dear girl," said she, "forgive me for being the cause of this unlooked for shock; believe me, had I the least reason to suspect what has occurred, I would rather have screened you from it; but Ashton is an amiable man, and however you may be prejudiced against his father, who is now my only brother, *he* deserves not to be included in your hatred; let me therefore reconcile you to him, you are near-relations, and may, for any thing I can see to the contrary be friends." "Do not suppose me capable of bearing any resentment to one who I know is innocent," replied Alicia, "but I cannot, indeed Madam I cannot meet Lord Ashton." "At present I

will not urge you," said Lady Jane, "but this evening or to-morrow you shall positively be introduced, and do justice to each other's merit."

Alicia sighed, "little did I suspect who I was to see when you spoke of Lord Ashton," said she. "You knew not then," replied her Ladyship, "that on the recent death of the infant Earl of Moreland, my brother Charles came into the possession of that title, and his son of course took that of Ashton; you suspected not either that I was the sister of that Whitmore, whom, I fear, you have much cause to dislike." "Heavens! did you know how much," cried Alicia, "you would not wonder that I shrunk from every person who bore his name." "Well, my dear," said Lady Jane, "I am ready to give him full credit for all, which, at another time, I shall request you to inform me of, but remember, I beseech you, that I no longer bear his name, and that of poor Augustus we will sink under the title of Lord Ashton."

She

She retired, and left Alicia to her meditations, who now began to recollect the generous expressions of Lord Ashton, when speaking of his father's newly acquired fortune. "Amiable Augustus!" said she, "how unworthy is such a parent to call you son."

Lady Jane mean while was in the course of conversation with her nephew, informed of an important secret; that Alicia, whom he had seen but twice before, had made so indelible an impression on his heart, that time and change of scene, so generally allowed to be the most infallible antidotes in all such cases, had no effect on him.

"When I left England," said he, "the Marley's were considered as aliens from their father's family, and so hateful were they to my mother, that to name them in her presence was a great offence; when, therefore, I beheld this lovely creature, and felt the influence of her charms, the conviction that I could not be guilty of a greater crime in

the eyes of my parents than to think favorably of her, raised such a conflict in my mind, as was injurious to my health ; reason, however, at length so far triumphed, that I quitted England without disclosing my unhappy passion. I had prosecuted my travels for a considerable time, when a letter from my sister Mary informed me, that the Marleys were received at the Hall, and become great favorites with Sir Augustus."

"Hope (alas ! how transient) now dawned upon my soul—my grandfather loved me, and I thought it very possible to convince him of the utility of uniting the long alienated branches of his family, by a marriage which would secure their future harmony, and make me blessed, if, on a nearer acquaintance, I could render myself acceptable to the mistress of my affections. I knew that the attempt was extremely hazardous, a thousand motives might induce her to reject me, and then I should be more deeply involved ; but what was it that I would not hazard with
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the hope of obtaining a reward so exquisite? To return to England therefore was my most ardent wish, and I wrote to my father for permission, but he informed me, that his affairs had taken such a turn, that so far from bringing me home, he was apprehensive of being obliged to go and reside abroad with the rest of his family, and concluded, with charging me, on my duty, not to think further of it."

"A prey to despondence I now wandered over Europe, seldom hearing from my father, till on his acquisition of the Marley estate I was recalled: I still bore the image of Alicia in my breast, and when I learned that she and her brother and sister were left wholly unprovided for, I could not conceive how it happened; when, being shown my grandfather's will, in the sincerity of my regret for the hapless sufferers I execrated his memory—the sisters, I was informed, were under the care of a relation in Scotland, and Augustus Marley, (the beggarly Baronet as

my mother called him) gone into the army, a circumstance which as it proved him to be a young man of spirit, endeared him to my heart."

"Soon after this my most tender apprehensions were awakened for the hapless females, by the death of Mrs. Aubry, with whom they lived. On expressing my fears for them, my most unfeeling sister, Alicia, replied, that as they were *beauties* there was little danger but they would make their fortunes. The indelicate insinuation which this conveyed doubly wounded me, as coming from the lips of my sister, and drew from me a rebuke so sharp, as to be the cause of much domestic discontent, and I have compleated my disgrace by proposing to my father, when he got possession of the Moreland estate to seek out the young Marleys, and settle on them sufficient to preserve them from distress. I can give you no adequate idea of his behaviour on this occasion, and believe he would have put his threat of turning
me

me pennyless on the world in execution, but for my mother, who, though equally averse from my proposal, was somewhat flattered by the manner in which I spoke of my father's obligations to her family (which were certainly very great) in order, if possible, to interest his gratitude in favor of those I pleaded for, but it was in vain."

"Yes, that I could swear," said Lady Jane, "gratitude was never an inmate of his breast; any more than honor. But here, my dear Ashton, is a very fine and a very amiable girl, in every respect but fortune your equal, you are not entirely dependant on your father, and if you outlive him you will in spite of fate be Earl of Moreland, why, therefore, do you hesitate in making yourself happy?"

"How?" said he. "By marrying Alicia Marley," replied Lady Jane. "And do you think I would hesitate at that?" said Lord Ashton, "no, surely, but is it not too evident that she utterly dislikes me?" "Not at all," said Lady Jane, "the case is this, she

is ignorant of your sentiments toward her, she thinks all your family her natural enemies, and was hurt that one of them should witness her humbled state." "If it is so," cried he, "if I could convince her how dear she is to my soul,——" "There cannot be a more convincing proof of your love," said the lady, "than a serious offer of your hand, are you willing to do this?" "Am I willing to live?" cried he, "but, too sure she would reject me." "I'm of another opinion," replied her Ladyship, "and, if you please, I'll break the matter to Alicia."

He hesitated.—"Wretch," cried she, "do you then shrink?" "By no means," he replied, "but I am almost a stranger to Miss Marley, and I cannot think it consistent with that delicacy which, I believe her to possess, to receive the proffered hand of a man to whom (if she feels not absolute hatred) she must be wholly indifferent; add to this, the strong barriers of prejudice which lie between us, and I think it almost certain, that a proceeding

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ing so abrupt as what you propose, would tend to disgust her, and deprive me of the chance heaven has given me of making myself acceptable to her; suffer me then to remain your guest, and if she is to be mine, let it be an act of free choice, not the effect of persuasion, so shall I be doubly blessed."

"Well," said Lady Jane, "be it so, I am only anxious for the happiness of two people whom I actually love extremely, how it is effected can be of little consequence."

Her ladyship was not quite sincere in this declaration, for though she was extremely attached to her nephew, and had conceived a friendship for Alicia, there was a motive more powerful than both, by which she was stimulated to take an active part in the business before her—it was revenge.

In early life she had formed a tender attachment, which carried her beyond the bounds of modesty, an elopement with her lover was planned, but by the vigilance of her

brother was prevented, and though she acknowledged to him that her honor stood in need of reparation, though he owed the preservation of his life to the man of her choice, he persisted in forcing them asunder, and afterwards, by the great influence he had over his father, was the means of compelling her to become the wife of Mr. Hammond, whom she detested. Those injuries had rankled in her bosom, and she longed for vengeance; when therefore she saw a probability of obtaining it in some sort, by the unauthorized marriage of his only son, for whom she doubted not but he had views, the frustration of which would nearly break his heart; she eagerly contributed all in her power to forward so desirable an event, and determined to exaggerate the affair highly, by condoling with her brother on his son's degrading marriage with her waiting maid, leaving it to time and chance to reveal the truth, which she believed would be a blow nearly as severe from what she had learned of his hatred to the innocent orphans of the House of Marley

ley, whom she was ready to believe he had greatly injured.

Thus interested, Lady Jane used all her eloquence to prevail on the timid reluctant Alicia to receive the proffered friendship of Lord Ashton — she joined their trembling hands, and telling them that they were worthy of each other, recommended to them to discard all family prejudices, in the origin of which they were wholly unconcerned, and indulge for each other the tender regard which similarity of disposition and near relationship would naturally awaken in independent minds.

With hearts strongly biased in each other's favor, the consequence of this introduction was infallible, Lord Ashton was soon on such terms with his fair cousin as to disclose his passion, without much fear of a repulse, and she was too artless to be able to conceal her own: — His Lordship spoke of marriage — Alicia believed it impossible to be accomplished

plished with the consent of Lord Moreland, without which she declared her resolution of never becoming the wife of his son; but, Alicia was in love, and the resolutions of people in that state, when in opposition to their inclinations, are seldom very firm; Lady Jane well knew this, and urging a private marriage as the only possible means of avoiding an eternal separation, soon brought Alicia to listen to the arguments which his Lordship offered on the same subject, and at length obtained her consent; it was agreed, therefore, that the ceremony should be performed at Southampton, from whence they should set off immediately for Bristol, there to embark for Ireland, preferring that country for the easiness of access to it, which was rendered difficult with the continent in consequence of the war.

Lady Jane, fertile in contrivance, planned every thing and confiding in her own woman and Lord Ashton's valet, they sat out as on a party of pleasure, and effected their purpose

pose with ease, when Lady Jane making the bride some very handsome presents, took her leave, and returning to her seat with well dissembled rage declared that her nephew had eloped with Miss Williams, and wrote, as she had long determined, the doleful tidings to the Earl of Moreland; mean while Alicia and her husband proceeded to Bristol, where, after resting a few days under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Williams, they embarked for Ireland, on board a vessel which had been hired for a gentleman of that country and his family, who, when applied to by Lord Ashton, obligingly gave him his passage.

The gentleman received Alicia very politely on deck, and conducting her to the cabin, introduced her to his wife, saying, "this Madam, is Lady Saunders." "Lady Saunders!" repeated Alicia, "my dearest aunt, don't you know Alicia Marley?" They flew into each other's arms, and the pleasure of this meeting served to banish in a great measure the disagreeable apprehensions which
both

both ladies had entertained respecting the voyage.

They had much to inform each other of. Lady Ashton declared her situation, and presented her husband by his proper name, and Lady Saunders informed her niece, that she was returning from the South of France, where she had attended Sir Robert for the recovery of his health, in which he had happily succeeded; — she had been in London, she said, for a few days, and called at Lady Stanmore's, to whom Augustus had introduced her when she was there on her way to France; she was informed by the servants, that their Lord and Lady were on a tour to Scotland, purposely to visit the Miss Marleys. "Thence," she added, "we went to Bath, where we continued ever since."

"Did you not call at Mr. Fenwick's?" asked Alicia. "No, indeed," replied her aunt, "I know nothing of him since his second marriage, nor ever will." They arrived,

rived, after a safe and pleasant voyage, at the destined port, whence Lord and Lady Ashton consented to accompany their kind relations to their elegant and hospitable mansion.

Before Alicia had quitted the house of Lady Jane Hammond, she had written to her sister, and charged Lady Jane with the letter, which was to be forwarded immediately on her ladyship's return from Southampton; it contained an account of her marriage, and whither she was gone, concluding with a promise of writing from Ireland, where, as soon as she should be settled, she hoped her dear Lucy would rejoin her. This letter however, Lady Jane thought proper to put into the fire, lest Lucy Marley knowing of her sister's marriage with Ashton, should be the means of the circumstance reaching the ears of Lord Moreland before he was sufficiently tormented, by believing his son had married a waiting maid, after which, she hoped the additional blow of his daughter-in-law proving to be one of the
hated

hated Marleys, would compleat the vengeance she desired, by breaking his heart.

On Lucy's arrival at Stanmore Park, she wrote to Alicia, acquainting her with all that had passed, and desiring her to appoint a day for Lord Stanmore's carriage to attend her, at Lady Jane's, to bring her to the park. Receiving no answer, she wrote again, soon after which her second letter came back, with the words "gone elsewhere," written on it. Greatly alarmed, Lucy thought of applying to Lady Jane, but this Lord Stanmore prevented, by offering to make a personal application to her Ladyship, on which he accordingly set out, but after an absence of sufficient length to create fearful apprehensions in his mother and Lucy, for his safety, he returned with the most distressing uncertainty, visible on his countenance. Lady Jane was gone to visit her daughter, and on inquiring for Miss Williams, the servants who remained in the house informed him, that she was gone away long ago, with Lady Jane's nephew,

nephew, a young Lord, and that their mistress took on sadly about it. Surprised and hurt at this tale, he resolved to follow Lady Jane, but on arriving at Lord Clareville's, was informed that the family were gone into Wales, to a seat his Lordship had there. "Fearful of alarming you by a longer absence," he added, "I now thought it best to return, and consult about the next step to be taken in this inexplicable affair."

The bitterest anguish seized on the heart of Lucy, which was no way relieved by receiving the promised letter from Ireland, (forwarded by Mrs. Loyd) as it only mentioned her safe arrival, and the place of her residence, where she invited her sister in a gay stile, declaring that it was a perfect Paradise, and inclosing a note to bear her expences, signed her name Alicia Williams, which was the sur-name she and Lord Ashton still bore; the circumstance of being at Sir Robert Saunders's was suppressed by general

ral agreement, in order to surprise Lucy agreeably on her expected arrival.

The fears of Lucy were now confirmed, and her affliction was extreme. "My sister," she would cry, "my dearest Alicia, is it possible such angelic purity could be corrupted? Alas! it is too plain, she does not even affect the semblance of virtue—she does not pretend to be his wife, but uses her feigned maiden name, and dares to invite her sister to the habitation of vice." Lord and Lady Stanmore, with the tenderest solicitude, endeavoured to console the fair mourner, but their efforts were unsuccessful; her grief was of that irremidable nature, for which the researches of love and friendship could not find a balm, even the voice of religion failed to soothe her. Had her sister died, she would, while she bewailed her loss, have thought of her as of an angel of light, and the conviction of her happiness, would have brought consolation with it; but, fallen into infamy,
every

every idea that glanced towards that dreadful image was fraught with horror.

Lucy's health declined, and Lord Stanmore almost frantic with his fears of losing her, called in the faculty, they ordered her to Bath, and thither she was without delay conveyed. Mean while Alicia, filled with disquiet at neither seeing nor hearing from her sister, wrote another letter, directed to the house of Mrs. Loyd, who sent it forward to Stanmore Park, whence it was conveyed to Bath, and reached Lucy a few days after her marriage with Lord Stanmore. This letter she thought proper to answer, and enclosing the bank note, informed Mrs. Williams that she must decline all further correspondence till her very unaccountable conduct, if possible, be cleared up. Poor Alicia received this, in her opinion, very cruel letter, a day after she had seen, in a news-paper, an account of the celebration of her sister's nuptials. Deeply wounded, and with streaming eyes, she wrote a few lines in reply, deploring
the

the estrangement of her sister's affection, and concluding with these words —

“However impossible I once thought it, I now see too plainly, that Lady Stanmore shining in that sphere which she is formed to adorn, can look with contempt on her whose less auspicious fortune has involved her in a cloud of mystery, which, however, has been sufficiently explained to her much loved Lucy, by the afflicted,

ALICIA WILLIAMS.”



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CHAP. XI.

THE last letter of Alicia mentioning her having given her sister an explanation of that mystery, with which she acknowledged herself to be surrounded, for the first time suggested to Lucy the probability of a letter having miscarried, and that her beloved sister, notwithstanding appearances, might be innocent; this cordial hope revived her spirits extremely, and to acquit herself of that unkind neglect of one so nearly allied to her, which Alicia accused herself of, as well as to prove that her suspicions had not been founded on slight grounds, she sat down and committed

mitted to writing every circumstance that occurred since their separation, and sent it forward by post to Ireland, desiring that her sister would faithfully follow her example, after which no mistake could remain unexplained between them, and if Alicia's innocence was rendered manifest, they would be re-united.

The air of Bath having agreed with Lucy, and the Dowager Lady Stanmore having met some friends there, who formed an agreeable party, it was determined to return no more to Stanmore Park for that season, but to go from Bath to their winter residence in London, as soon as the company at the former place should begin to separate.

Mrs. Whitmore, now Countess of Moreland, with her daughters, arrived there in great pomp, but in consequence of the active part taken by the Stanmores in favor of Augustus Marley, all connexion between the families was broken off, and Lady Alicia
Whitmore

Whitmore affected to look with great indifference, if not contempt, on Lord Viscount Stanmore, and his blooming Lucy, while she encouraged the addresses of a foreign Marquis, who had followed her from Bristol Wells, where she at first attracted his attention to the different places she had visited in the course of the season.

While the time was passing pleasantly to all but Lucy, who was in anxious expectation of Alicia's explanatory letter, a circumstance occurred which drew her attention for a time wholly to another family concern. Lord Stanmore received a letter, which he hastened to communicate to his wife and mother, the contents of which gave rise to many strange conjectures—it was as follows.

Raymond Grove, August 29.

“My Lord,

“Having been informed by the public prints of your marriage with Miss Marley

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on

on which I sincerely congratulate her and your Lordship, and knowing that her brother is on the Continent, whence I am but just returned, I think you the most proper person to be informed of an important discovery which I have made, relative to the Marley estate. Lady Stanmore will readily recollect the unfortunate Harcourt, who not long since she saw in the habit of a private soldier, at Durham, in which character I joined the army abroad, but an unexpected event has recalled me to my native land—an uncle of my mother's, named Raymond, who made a considerable fortune at the bar, where in his youth he was considered very eminent, after having lived to a great age, and been for some time in a state of second childhood, has lately died, and by a will made when I was ten years old, I am become sole heir to his fortune. Mr. Dobs, his executor and my guardian, having with difficulty traced me out, and informed me of this, I immediately returned to England, and repaired to the late residence of my uncle, where I found Mr.

Dobs

Dobs and his family in charge of the house and effects, which were rendered up to me, and as I had much to adjust in consequence of the long debility of my predecessor, he kindly consented to remain and give me his assistance; in the course of those transactions I have discovered him to be a man of most consummate art and hypocrisy, which, however, he conceals under a well affected frankness of manners. Thus acquainted with his character, my suspicions of fraud were quickly awakened, and induced me to trace to a certain confirmation the circumstance which relates to Sir Augustus Marley."

"I had not been above a week at home, when a stranger arrived about business to Mr. Dobs, whom as I saw him cross the lawn, in conversation with my good guardian, I mistook for Charles Manning, (Lady Stanmore knows the wretch I mean) Alarmed at this, I pursued them, in order to discover, if possible, what sort of connexion was between them; on getting a nearer view of the

stranger, though the likeness was extreme, I found my mistake, and was about to retire, as being no way concerned in their business, when the winding of a wood-walk in which they were brought them so near me, that I distinctly heard the name of Marley pronounced by both; this sound riveted my attention, but the serpentine turning of the walk bore them from me again so suddenly as to prevent me from hearing more than what follows, which was enough."

"My Lord," said the stranger, "thinks eight thousand an enormous sum, and will not give a guinea more." "Return to him then," replied Dobs, "and tell him, that I will not take a guinea less than ten, tell him also, that I have a good assurance that young Marley is recovered of his wounds, to whom if your Lord does not soon agree to my demand, I will certainly restore the deed, the production of which will not only put him in possession of his birth-right, but brand your Lord with the —"

"Here

"Here I lost the sentence, which I would have given the world to have heard to the end. Disappointed in this I quitted my situation, and taking a direction which soon brought me to their view, I met and joined them, in order to break up the conference, in hopes that some happy chance may bring me to the renewal of it."

"The stranger, who proved to be Walter Manning, the confidential servant of Mr. Whitmore, continued his discourse in my presence, without the least embarrassment, and said, "My Lord is so perplexed in settling the affairs of his late brother, and clearing the estate of incumbrances, that it is possible he may not have leisure to determine about this matter so soon as you expect, therefore I hope you will be so considerate as not to proceed till you hear from him again, as it is better to settle matters amicably if we can." "He has put me off so frequently," said Dobs. "Well," replied Walter, "a few weeks can make no difference, and if things

cannot be brought about before two months we know the worst—will you give us that time?" "I will," said Dobs, "but not a moment longer, your Lord's parsimony is enough to set one mad." "'Tis a natural infirmity," replied Walter, smiling, "but indeed my Lord has so large a family that he is to be excused; remember your promise before this gentleman, you give us two months to consider?" "I do," said Mr. Dobs."

"Walter now departed, and I in a careless manner inquired who he was, observing, that he was a very faithful servant. Mr. Dobs informed me, adding, that he was employed in a trifling suit against this man's master, Lord Moreland, and that honest Walter was sent with proposals of peace and amity, on the part of his Lordship. I inquired no further, and immediately determined on transmitting this account to you, thinking that the best step to be taken is to recall Sir Augustus from the Continent; let him come hither, where I will contrive to detain Dobs, and

and I think we shall be able jointly not only to make him resign the deed, but oblige him to confess all he knows besides, respecting the case in question. I do not presume however, to dictate to your Lordship, and shall be ready to concur in any measure which you may deem more prudent.

I have the honor to be,

Your Lordship's and Lady Stanmore's

Most faithfully devoted servant, &c.

GEORGE HARCOURT."

The astonishment excited by the discovery of this piece of villany was not so great as at the manner in which it was discovered; the over-ruling hand of Providence was manifest throughout, in making Harcourt, who was intended as an instrument of destruction by the wretched Whitmore, the very means of ma-

king that destruction light on his own guilty head.

Lucy at leisure recounted all she knew of this extraordinary young man, to her husband and mother, and it was finally resolved to follow his advice, which determination he was acquainted with by a letter from Lord Stanmore, in which he made many grateful acknowledgments for the important discovery.

Mean while Augustus, who had recovered from his wound, and received promotion in the army, was highly esteemed by his brother officers, and distinguished by the particular notice of his Royal Commander, whose humility not only led him to an acquaintance the most pleasingly familiar with his officers, but brought him often into discourse with the private soldiers, every individual of whom would have died for him, while he, with the utmost cheerfulness partook of the coarsest fare, to which the fortune of war reduced them, in an enemy's country, and never.

never availed himself of his rank to avoid a share in their hardships. Before this amiable Prince Augustus freely laid the tale of his misfortunes, and on hearing from Lord Stanmore the necessity of his return to England, obtained immediate permission.

“I am sorry to part with you, name-fake,” said the Prince, “and hope, when I meet you next, you will be in possession of your rights, but indeed, Marley, it is a pity you should be any thing but a soldier.” “The approbation of your Royal Highness,” replied Augustus, “does me the greatest honor, and I assure you that the utmost success in what I am going about shall not prevent me from returning.” “I sincerely wish you success,” replied the Prince, “and assure you that you may be always certain of a welcome reception in the army while I possess the command.” With these gracious assurances Augustus attended by Joseph, set out with the dispatches which the Duke was sending to the Ministry, and with speed and safety

arrived in England, and posted to London, where the family of Stanmore received him with open arms, and the most cordial demonstrations of affection.

After a few days rest, concluding that no time was to be lost, as more than six weeks had passed since the first intelligence had been received from Harcourt, Augustus, with his friend and brother, Lord Stanmore, attended only by Joseph, set off on horseback for Raymond Grove, the residence of Mr. Harcourt, in Berkshire, it was only one day's journey, and they meant to sleep at the Grove that night.

They accordingly set out at day-break, and arrived at the end of their journey early in the evening, having dined on the road. Harcourt seemed highly pleased at the visit, received them with the most polite hospitality, and having concerted their measures in private, it was agreed that they should not be introduced to Dobs till supper, immediately
after

after which the attack on him was to commence. Accordingly when they entered the supper-room Mr. and Mrs. Dobs, with a young girl, their daughter, appearing, Mr. Harcourt introducing Lord Stanmore and Sir Augustus Marley, as his old and most particular friends; the countenance of Dobs underwent a very apparent change, but believing his secret to be quite secure, he soon brightened up and became good company.

As soon as a round of the usual healths was drank, Augustus said, as we must quit you very early in the morning, Harcourt, in order to fulfil our promises in London, I think it better to speak about the business we came on at once." Mrs. Dobs and her daughter immediately retired, and her husband looking alarmed, also rose up, but Harcourt detained him, saying, "My dear Sir, we can do nothing without you." "Without me?" stammered out Dobs, "O, it is some law business." "Partly," replied Lord Stanmore, "pray, Sir, be seated."

"A gentleman so conversant in the courts as I suppose you are," said Augustus, "cannot be ignorant of the successful attempt I have made to recover my birth-right; you know the cause likewise of my ill success."

"Yes, Sir," replied Dobs, "it was the topic of discourse at our club for some time, and I have heard various opinions on the case." —

"Well, Sir," added Augustus, "I am now in a fair way of having ample redress, I have obtained proofs that my grand-father's will was a forgery, and that there is a certain deed in your possession which —" "In—in—in

my possession?" cried Dobs, scarcely able to breathe. "Come, come," said Harcourt,

"we will cut the matter short, the negotiation between you and Lord Moreland is fully discovered, and though you should persist in denying the deed, it will avail him nothing, as you can be compelled to produce it, so you may as well honestly give it up, with a good grace, nay, better, than be made an accomplice with that ruffian, in the suit which is about to be instituted, in which his practices

practices in concert with some notorious characters, will all come out." "Indeed—I assure you—I can declare upon oath," cried the agitated Dobs, "that I know nothing about his practices; as for the will, to be sure I know it must have been forged because the late Sir Augustus had not the power of making it, as the estate was so circumstanced that without levying fines he could not do it." "And that," said Augustus, "the deed in your possession clearly proves." "It does," replied Dobs. "Be so good as to produce it," said Augustus. "I will, Sir," cried Dobs, "but first let me entreat that as my character which has never been blemished, is much in your power, you will, for the sake of my family, when this affair comes to be publicly discussed, not represent me in the unfavorable light which it must be owned I deserve; but let this be my excuse, that after many years labour in my profession, I am a poor man; I have a large family, and ten thousand pounds, which I believe Lord Moreland

Moreland would have given me, is a tempting sum."

The tears stood in his eyes while he spoke, and Augustus pitying a wretch detected in his guilt, hastened to relieve him, by giving his honor that he should be spared as far as circumstances would admit.

"Then that will be entirely," said Dobs, "which I will show you in a moment, this deed, which I suppose was entrusted to his care, I found amongst the papers of Mr. Raymond, and now restore to you, in presence of these gentlemen; this being made public, will serve me in the opinion of the world, and I am not afraid of Lord Moreland betraying me, for his own sake, neither can he oppose any plea to prevent you immediately possessing yourself of your estate, which he must give up the moment you produce the deed." "Shall matters rest thus, Sir Augustus?" said Harcourt. "If you desire it, certainly, my friend," replied Augustus.

gustus. "I do most earnestly," said Harcourt. "Then be it so with all my heart," returned the generous Marley. "Best of men," exclaimed Dobs, in a tone between crying and speaking, "why did I ever give way to a thought of injuring you?" he then left the room, and returned in a few moments with the deed, which he presented to Augustus, "Now, Mr. Dobs," said Lord Stanmore. "though you have lost a large sum of money by this transaction, I assure you it shall be in a great measure recompensed by the good reputation you will gain, and by the approbation of your own conscience, in having rendered up to this gentleman his right." Dobs, deeply sighing, replied, "Ah! my Lord, my conscience is far from being clear of offence, for the design was as criminal as the act, and it is heaven itself, by what means I know not, that has prevented the completion of the crime."

This business being happily concluded, the gentlemen separated for the night, after
 Lord

Lord Stanmore and Augustus had exchanged mutual promises of friendly intercourse with Harcourt, who obtained their consent to take an early breakfast with him before they should set out on their return to London next morning, after he had vainly pressed them to lengthen their visit another day, from which they excused themselves on account of having promised the ladies to return; their kind host proposing to accompany them a part of the way, they gladly accepted the offer, having found him a most agreeable companion, and he informed them on the road, that he was by his uncle's will obliged to take the name of Raymond, "under which," said he, "I hope all the errors of Harcourt will be as compleatly forgotten as they are abjured, however I will visit as little as possible the scenes of my former dishonorable exploits, and will confine my enjoyments to the tranquil pleasures of the country."

They applauded his determination, at the same time that they engaged his promise to
visit

visit them at their country seats, in the course of the next summer; and, he added, that as he hoped to sweeten his retirement by making Fanny Dobs, whom they had seen, and very much admired the night before, the companion of it, he would beg to be permitted to introduce her to the ladies of their united families, whom he held in high esteem. They assured him of a kind reception for her, and he soon after took his leave.

The delay of breakfasting at Raymond Grove, and riding slowly with Harcourt for several miles, had very much encroached on the day, which was in October; and though they stopped but a very short time to take a slight refreshment by way of dinner, it was night when they entered on the dreary heath of Hounslow, not without apprehensions of danger, as they were very ill provided for an encounter with banditti; however, as there was an early moon, it cheered their spirits, and they proceeded at a brisk pace till they had

had nearly crossed the heath, Joseph riding before them, who was the only person armed.

They were beginning to congratulate themselves on their safety, when Joseph slackening his pace, said, that he saw a company of horsemen advancing, in a cross direction, evidently with a design to intercept them. "They are undoubtedly robbers," said Lord Stanmore, and as we can make no defence we must quietly give up our purses." "Let us push forward, however," said Augustus, "perhaps our horses are better than theirs, and may bring us off." They accordingly got into a gallop, Joseph still going foremost.

The moon though some time risen, was so obscured by heavy clouds, which moved slowly over it, as to yield but a faint uncertain light, so that though every surrounding object was discernible, yet all was so involved in gloom, as to render it impossible to make any distinct observation on the figures of those who approached, they were three in number,

number, and one of them out-riding his companions, came up with Joseph, and calling out to him to stand, fired a pistol at his head, fortunately, however, it missed him, and he returning the fire with a better aim, brought his enemy to the ground, and facing about with his second pistol presented at the other two, who were now come up, each with pistols in their hands, when Lord Stanmore seeing a fair opportunity, struck one of them so forcibly on the arm as to oblige him to let the pistol drop, which discharged in the fall, without doing any damage. In a seeming rage he stood in his stirrups and collecting all his force, returned the blow with such effect as threw his Lordship off his horse at the instant the third man fired at him, which was thus rendered ineffectual, the ball passing over him as he fell and lodging in the side of his antagonist, who, with a deep groan tumbled to the ground—the wretch who fired the shot exclaimed, with a great oath, that he had shot his friend, and endeavoured to fly, but was prevented by Joseph,
who

who had still reserved his charge——Augustus had alighted to assist Lord Stanmore, who was only stunned and soon recovered, and they were now compleat masters of the field.

The man who received the first wound was able to sit on his horse, to which they tied him, and perceiving that the other shewed signs of life, they staunched the blood which flowed abundantly from his wound, as well as time and circumstances would allow, and having tied up his wound with handkerchiefs, and laid him across two horses, bore him slowly on, Joseph preceding them with the other two prisoners on one horse, one of whom (the wounded man) uttering the most horrid blasphemy, and execrating his fate, while the other preserved a full silence.

The travellers had not proceeded far in this manner, when they overtook a chaise, attended by servants, and, making their situation

tion known, two gentlemen immediately got out, and the wounded men were put in with a servant to support one of them, who was quite senseless, and thus in a short time they arrived at the house of these gentlemen, on the borders of the heath, when the servant in the carriage declaring that the prisoner which he supported was expiring, it was resolved to proceed no farther, but to send for the proper persons to take them into custody, and a surgeon to examine and dress their wounds, they were accordingly taken into the house, but how great was the astonishment of the gentlemen, when removing a black crape from the face of the dying man, they beheld the features of Lord Moreland. The other wounded man was Charles Manning, the third was Walter, who though he escaped unhurt in his person, was wounded even more fatally in his mind, and appeared sunk into silent despair.

Mr. Green, the gentleman of the house, (who knew Lord Moreland) ordered every
necessary

necessary attention to be paid him, and a surgeon soon after arriving, pronounced his wound mortal. His accomplices were sent to prison, and the wretched man, having obtained a respite from pain, and a short repose, by the applications of the Surgeon, recovered his recollection so far, as to order his wife to be sent for who was in London. Lord Stanmore with the son of Mr. Green immediately set off for this purpose, as well as to inform Lady Stanmore and Lucy of the transaction, and returned towards morning with the Countess, who on entering the house outrageously inquired who it was that had murdered her husband, declaring that she would have vengeance, and calling down the wrath of heaven on Augustus Marley.

Lord Moreland supported by pillows received his wife, and entreating her to be calm, took an affectionate leave of his daughter Mary, (the only one who accompanied her mother) and sending the afflicted girl with his blessing from the chamber, desired
that

that the gentlemen of the house with a clergyman (who had been sent for at his request) Lord Stanmore, Augustus, and the Surgeon may attend; when ordering the door to be locked, he made a full confession of all his guilty practices towards the Marleys, assuring his wife that he died by the hand of Walter, his own servant, who meant the shot for another, "but heaven," cried he "directed it from the innocent to the guilty breast." He then entreated that, if possible, the whole affair might be concealed for the sake of his children, whom, he reminded Augustus, were his near relations. "My son," said he, "has disgraced his family by marrying a menial servant, but I now forgive him and all the world."

Lord Moreland expired in a few hours, and his Lady, horror-struck at the tale she had heard, was conveyed to London, in a state bordering on insanity; Lord Stanmore and Mr. Green gave every necessary order respecting the remains of the unfortunate Moreland;

land; and Augustus deeply shocked returned with his brother-in-law to town, where he remained very ill for several days, during which period he was visited by Mr. Elwood who had heard of his return to England, and who, in concert with Lord Stanmore, adjusted every matter relative to the late melancholy event.

The public prints announced Lord Moreland's death, to have been the consequence of a shot received from a highway-man, on Hounslow Heath—and Walter with his brother having acknowledged every thing, and sued for mercy, were with their own consent conveyed to North America, as their punishment would have caused an unavoidable discovery of facts.

Lord Moreland having discovered that Augustus was in England, immediately dispatched Walter to Mr. Dobs with the ten thousand pounds, but Walter delaying on the road, about other business, was a day

too

too late, for on arriving at Raymond Grove about an hour after Augustus and his friends had quitted it, he was informed of the truth by Dobs, who boasted that he had resigned the deed to the right owner, who was but just departed. Walter waited not to upbraid him with a breach of promise, but galloped off at full speed to his Lord, who with Charles (now in his service) was at a little hunting lodge of the late Earl's, near the London road.

On a short consultation it was agreed the plan being suggested by Walter, to meet and rob Augustus of the deed, upon the heath, through which he was obliged to pass; but Charles hinting that in all such cases it was a rule with him to make sure work, observing that dead men could not tell tales; the ill fated Moreland, who, wicked as he was, startled at murder, resolved to go himself to prevent it; accordingly disguising themselves, and covering their faces with crape, they traversed the heath all the evening, and

the dreadful catastrophe ensued. Joseph, who wore a military surlout, and hat, had been mistaken by the whole party for Augustus, and under this idea, Charles, who seemed bent on murder, fired the shot at him, while Lord Moreland and Walter were too distant to interfere.

Lucy's affliction on her sister's account was now all returned, in consequence of not having received the smallest intelligence from her in reply to the long letter written from Bath, and Augustus, from whom she had concealed as much as possible, of what she feared more than ever to be the truth, became so importunate, respecting the fate of his beloved Alicia, that Lucy, who found herself unequal to the painful task, referred him to the Dowager Lady Stanmore for full information—the emotions of a soul glowing with almost romantic ideas of honor, as was that of Augustus, receiving such a stab, where most delicately vulnerable, are not easily described—rage, indignation, and revenge agitated

tated him alternately, till at length the latter triumphed over every other passion, and he took the resolution of going to Ireland to wreak his vengeance on the seducer of his sister. He gave private orders to Joseph for the purpose, and was ready to set off in a few hours, when he received a card from the young Earl of Moreland, requesting his company for an hour, and apologizing for not first waiting on him, by adding, that he was but a few hours in London, had travelled with great speed, and could not quit his lady, who was fatigued and indisposed after her journey, yet was so anxious to embrace a kinsman whom he highly esteemed, that he had ventured to make this request.

Augustus, who had never seen this gentleman was rather surprised at the earnest manner in which he solicited his presence, but yet did hesitate to comply with his desire—he accordingly went, and the first glance he had of the interesting figure of Lord Moreland engaged his admiration. “I would speak

to you," said his Lordship, "of those unhappy circumstances which till this moment have kept us asunder, but that I think the retrospect would be painful to us both, we will therefore, if you please, consign the past to oblivion, and look forward to a long and uninterrupted friendship." "It is what I wish," replied Augustus, taking his offered hand, "and what I hope will be fully accomplished."

"You have heard, no doubt," said Lord Moreland, "of my very disgraceful marriage, and my anxious desire to exculpate myself from such a charge, in your opinion, was the cause of my early request to see you, will you therefore permit me to introduce the angelic woman whom I have the happiness to call my wife, for I am persuaded that a sight of her will have more effect in obtaining your approbation than all I can say in her praise, which may very naturally be attributed to partiality." "You do me great honor," replied Augustus, "in making me the judge
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of your conduct, but I assure you my opinion is already fixed, that you could not make an improper choice." "From my soul I thank you for the compliment," said his Lordship, then opening the door of another apartment, Alicia entered, and flew into the arms of her brother, who yielding to the force of affection, folded her for a moment to his bosom, then holding her from him, and gazing with a sort of incredulous astonishment, "Good heaven!" he exclaimed, "is it possible—are you indeed the chaste wife of Lord Moreland?" "And did my brother too," she replied, "doubt the principles of his Alicia?" "My injured love," cried he, and pressed her to his breast, while she burst into tears.

"Come, come," cried Lady Saunders, "hastily making her appearance from the inner apartment, "for goodness sake let us have no whimpering, we have had too much of that already." "My dear aunt," cried Augustus, "you here too?" "Yes, indeed,

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deed," she replied, "I have been tempted to quit even the Isle of Saints, to enjoy the happiness of my kindred for a little while, and lo! we are met in tears." Augustus saluted her, declaring, that he was truly pleased to see her, and would contribute all in his power to make her stay in England agreeable.

Alicia appearing to be in a very delicate state of health, her brother inquired tenderly into the cause, and was answered by his aunt, who said, "the poor girl has been so afflicted at the unkind behaviour of her sister, that she has had a fit of illness, from which she is but just recovered; she and I were on the point of coming over to explain matters personally with this saucy Lucy, when we read of Lord Moreland's death in the news-papers, which made it necessary for this gentleman to visit England; his sister, Lady Mary, to whom he instantly sent, and who is now here, informed us of your being in London, and some other particulars. Au-
gustus

gustus now undertook to manage the interview between his sisters, which, notwithstanding every precaution, was truly affecting; and Lord Stanmore informed the Earl of Moreland of the circumstance which had ascertained the title of Augustus to the estate of his ancestors, but that amiable young nobleman replied, that it only saved him the trouble of perfecting deeds of conveyance, which were then actually drawing up, for the purpose of restoring to the natural heir what his Lordship could not consider himself justifiable in with-holding.

The misfortunes of the amiable orphans being thus happily terminated, the whole party of friends (including Lady Mary Whitmore) agreed to accompany Augustus to Marley Hall, there to spend their Christmas, however unfashionable it may be considered to visit the country at that season of the year; but it was the season fixed on for the nuptials of Augustus, with the lovely Charlotte Somerville, to whom, accompanied by
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the worthy Mr. Elwood, he paid an early visit on the recovery of his rights, and solicited that heart which was already his—she despised the affectation of being wooed to compliance, and frankly accepted the offered hand of him she truly loved. His family visited her at Richmond, where she resided with her mother, and the nuptials being fixed for the twenty-second of December, accordingly took place, and next day he conducted his fair bride, with their mutual friends to the Hall, where old Margery had the satisfaction of seeing him preside in the true spirit of ancient hospitality, which he took a pride in reviving on this joyful occasion.

F I N I S.